

Tenants' Voice

02 July 2025, 6pm - 8pm, hybrid meeting

Present:

TV Members:

In person –

Pawla Cottage (PC) (Chair)	Tenant
Gibran Afzal (GA)	Tenant
Garry Harper (GH)	Tenant
Syed Uddin (SU)	Tenant
Terry McGreenera (TM)	Tenant
Luigi Candela (LC)	Leaseholder

Staff:

In person -

Darren Reynolds (DR)	Interim Head of Regulatory Assurance
Chris Hope (CH)	Head of Repairs
Nojmul Hussain (NH)	Senior Resident Scrutiny Officer
Mohammed Baksh (MB)	Complaints Manager
Jenny Fisher (JF)	Policy Analyst
Alfie Coasts (AC)	Housing Policy and Regulations Officer

Online -

Daniele Lamarche (DL)	Leaseholder
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Apologies:

Kabir Ahmed (KA)	Lead Cabinet Member for Housing
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Summary of actions

1. **TM to send NH details of his enquiry.**
2. **Invite the lead officer managing storage applications at the next meeting.**
3. **GH to send NH details of the work notification he received which was not followed through.**
4. **Arrange a repair spotlight session with CH as a future agenda item. CH to report on progress against BCIs.**
5. **Explore how the Council can transparently reflect contract management and performance against KPIs for residents.**
6. **NH to correct a typo under point 2.5 and highlight proposal for Chair of the sub – committee to attend TV meeting with the lead Member.**
7. **Circulate the compensation policy.**
8. **PC to provide a foreword for the Complaints Performance Service and Improvement Report (2024).**
9. **Include communal heating management on a future agenda item.**
10. **Share lettable standards policy.**
11. **All to pencil in the 19th July training.**

1. Apologies
Apologies for absence was sent on behalf of Cllr Kabir Ahmed.
2. Minutes and matters arising
 - 2.1 Minutes from the previous meeting was agreed as an accurate record.
 - 2.2 *Shed storage applications* – some members raised that they have not heard back following their application submission for storage space and expressed concern around the lack of progress over the past few months.
NH reported that he has contacted the lead officer responsible for managing the application process and will raise with her if this is a systematic problem affecting wider residents.

Members requested NH to invite the lead officer to the next meeting to present an update on the storage review, including volume of applications against responses.

ACTION: NH to invite the lead officer managing storage applications at the next meeting.

- 2.3 TM mentioned that that he has not received a response in regard to his tenants rent account enquiry. TM was requested to send NH the details so he can raise with the relevant service.

ACTION: TM to send NH details of his enquiry.

3.0 Repairs Service – performance against appointment bookings

- 3.1 CH reported on the performance of the repairs service in relation to booking appointments. CH explained the Business Critical Indicators (BCIs) which the performance matrix progress is measured against. These are appointments kept, non emergency repair time, % of repairs first time, % of work in progress and resident experience.
- 3.2 Keeping to appointments has been a historic problem and an area identified by the Regulator. Since November, there has been significant improvements with appointments being kept going from 39% to 73%. Overall target is 85%, hence there is further improvement needed.
- 3.3 *Appointments and data assurance* - CH circulated a next step card which is provided to residents following an appointment. This is aimed at keeping residents informed about what they should expect after an initial appointment. CH explained the approach taken for assessing appointment bookings between both the Council and its contractor.

Discussion took place around circumstances whereby appointments are re-scheduled last minute in order for a contractor to attend an emergency e.g. flooding. The importance of notifying residents when an appointment is cancelled was emphasised by SU, as often residents require time off work. CH reported that on some occasions, contractors can arrange appointments ahead of schedule should they have completed work orders sooner than expected. The data around the above areas are captured as part of data assurance.

- 3.4 GH reported that he had notification for work order appointments such as for gas checks, however nothing was followed up. Discussion ensued around 'phantom' messaging and how the source of the messages can be identified and resolved.

JF advised ascertaining how many 'phantom' messages have been circulated and find out why. CH explained that to collate data around valid appointment messages from 'phantom' messages will be challenging. Also, LBTH does not audit messages sent out by contractors.

DR recommended that GH experience is used as a case study to help locate the message source and if this is a wider issue amongst residents.

NH requested GH to send him the details so this can be looked at.

ACTION: GH to send NH details of the work notification he received which did not follow through.

Tenants' Voice

- 3.5 Contract management – LC enquired about how we manage contractors. CH explained the contract management arrangement and KPIs; when there is underperformance, the Council can issue financial penalties.

Members enquired whether they can have figures for number of penalties issued, CH advised that the contract performance report is submitted to Cabinet and are published. Reports can be accessed by residents. DR emphasised that some data will be commercially sensitive, therefore can not be shared with the public or the Tenants' Voice Group.

- 3.6 GA proposed whether repair can be included as a standing item as had been under the Tower Hamlets Homes model and if CH can report back on progress against BCI targets. NH informed the group that historically the former Residents' Panel had spotlight sessions with the Head of Repairs around specific areas. This offers the option to a dedicated session on repairs performance and submit question in advance of the spotlight session. CH agreed that progress report in the form of a spotlight session can be facilitated.

ACTION: Arrange a repair spotlight session with CH as a future agenda item. CH to report on progress against BCIs.

JF proposed exploring how the Council can transparently reflect the contract management in regards to performance (KPIs) for residents.

ACTION: Explore how the Council can transparently reflect the contract management and performance against KPIs for residents.

4.0 Terms of Reference

- 4.1 New governance structure - NH presented the refresh of the group's terms of reference. The revised ToR reflects changes in the governance structure, i.e. the new Cabinet – Housing sub committee.
- 4.2 Tenants' and Residents Association membership – NH explained the TRA members are eligible to join, however it excludes TRA Chairs, Vice -Chairs and Treasurer positions. This has been included under point 3.0 of the ToR.

Members provided the following feedback:

- Correction was made on point 2.5 to amend 'who's' to whose.
- Proposal was made for the Chair of the Housing Management sub - committee, to attend a TV meeting so that there is a two way relationship rather than solely reporting back the work of TV to the sub – committee.

ACTION: NH to amend correction under point 2.5 and highlight proposal for Chair of the sub – committee to attend TV meeting with the lead Member.

5.0 Complaints Performance Service and Improvement Report 2024 -25

- 5.1 MB provided both an update on Q4 complaints performance, including the complaints report which is required to be submitted to the housing Ombudsman. MB highlighted and explained the key themes within the report, this includes

overall progress on stage 2 responses, key trends and themes, complaint reasons complaint outcomes, determinations and compensation paid between 2024-25.

5.2 Q4 Complaints performance summary –

- Residents' compliments included within the report was presented to TV members.
- Stage 1 performance declined, primarily due to resource issue in the repairs team and contract governance.
- At stage 2 there has been 100% compliance with the Ombudsman's code
- Promises made to residents are now being tracked, there is increased awareness of complaints process and complaint volume and team outputs have increased. This reflects improved performance.
- Further areas of performance was highlighted such as complaints volume by service area, overdue complaints, key themes, causes of complaints and lessons learnt.
- Some of the maladministration cases outlined was reported as 'legacy' cases as these were historic, i.e. between 2022-23, and does not represent the current period. Much of these were around redress. MB said that the Ombudsman's feedback has identified that compensation needs to be more reasonable. Compensation is an area which is not unique to Tower Hamlets but reflective across social landlords nationally.
- MB explained that we adopt our local compensation policy and redress is determined based on a case by case basis. This needs to align with the Ombudsman's remedy guidance on distress and inconvenience. MB emphasised that individual circumstances such as disability, resident time taken for filing a formal complaint etc is factored in before finalising the compensation. DR explained that efforts are made to ensure the right level of compensation is paid on the first instance, before it is escalated to the Ombudsman.
- DR explained that 96% of the maladministration was for complaint handling prior to stage 2 being managed by the current service area. Since taking ownership, there has been improvements.
- In response to PC's question, MB reported that there are 65 open cases, 40 are awaiting a decision from the Ombudsman, 4 are live cases and 21 are pre-action cases. The latter sits with the triaging and mediation team, these are being vetted by the Ombudsman before they can be closed.
- The council got a recognition following its lesson learnt report, part of a wider order under the Ombudsman.

PC requested the Council's compensation policy to be circulated.

ACTION: MB to circulate the compensation policy.

5.3 In response to questions, DR explained that whilst the complaints team manages complaints handling, we are reliant on contractors to provide information on work they are commissioned to do, e.g. door entry system. New processes include investing more resources in the repairs team to chase up work and having the triaging and logging complaints to sit with the complaints team instead of the housing service centre.

5.4 MB reported both ABCA and OCO had under performed. When contractors under performs, the council manages this through contract management. A key issue of failure is centred around poor communication. MB emphasised the importance of the ongoing work to change the current culture in keeping

residents informed about the progress in relation to resolving the specific problem as opposed to issuing the formal letter.

5.5 25 cases related to maladministration (failing by the landlord). The Ombudsman disagreed with the Council's findings at stage 2, for 4 of these cases. This was primarily for complaint handling failure at stage 1 and 2, failure to address all complaints point and inadequate compensation. There were only 3 cases where the Ombudsman was in agreement with the Council's compensation offer (reasonable offer redress)

5.6 Subject to approval of the Complaints Performance Service and Improvement Report (2024) from TV members, MB requested if the Chair could provide a foreword. PC agreed to provide this.

ACTION: PC to provide a foreword for the Complaints Performance Service and Improvement Report (2024).

5.7 SU asked if other members felt progress has been made in improving services as a result of their contributions; members stated they have seen positive outcomes.

6.0 Q4 Performance report

6.1 DR provided an update on Q4 performance report. DR mentioned some aspects of the update has been covered under MB's presentation.

6.2 Table 1: Status March 2025 – Monthly indicators

STATUS	Red	Amber	Green	N/A	All
No. of indicators:	8	0	2	7	17
Mar 2025	47%	0%	12%	41%	100%

- DR reported that there has been a positive trajectory in regard to performance, e.g. call answered is up to 94%. DR emphasised the importance of consistency.
- Overall tenant satisfaction is up to 68% from 54% from the previous quarter. The previous quarter was low due to issue surrounding communal heating systems and outages. Work is currently being done to ensure solutions. This is part of the winter plan.

SU suggested a future agenda item to look at the progress of managing communal heating.

ACTION: Include communal heating management on a future agenda item.

Tenants' Voice

- Voids turnaround has also seen a significant improvement since contractors were directed to prioritise this area. Some discussions took place around why residents decline void properties and the lettable standards was requested to be shared.

ACTION: Share lettable standards policy.

7.0 AOB

7.1 *TV recruitment* – NH informed members that recruitment is currently live for 3 new tenants and one tenant of a leaseholder. NH requested TV members to inform, residents that may be interested to join.

7.2 *Training* – Members were reminded that TPAS training schedule has been circulated. The first session will be held Saturday 19th July 2025 at the Town Hall. As dates could not be found where everyone is available, members proposed to open up the training for TRA members.

ACTION: All to pencil in the 19th July training.

ACTION: NH to invite TRA chairs to the training sessions.

8.0 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 10th September 2025