

## Tenants' Voice

09<sup>th</sup> April 2025, 6pm - 8pm, hybrid meeting

### Present:

TV Members:

*In person –*

Pawla Cottage (PC) (Chair)	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
Gulam Hussain (GHa)	Director of Neighbourhoods & Customer Service
Nojmul Hussain (NH)	Senior Resident Scrutiny Officer
Chris Smith (CS)	Head of Housing Resources
Mohammed Baksh (MB)	Complaints Manager
Jenny Fisher (JF)	Policy Analyst

*Online -*

Kerry Williamson (KW)	Head of Customer Access
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### Observers:

Shoshannah Turner (ST)	Repairs Coordinator
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### Apologies:

Gibran Afzal (GA)	Tenant
Lesley Owen (LO)	Business Development & Improvement Manager
Kabir Ahmed (KA)	Lead Cabinet Member for Housing

### **Summary of actions**

1. NH to resend communications consultation link to members.
2. GHa to find out the planned works on TMs block and update TM.
3. Members to email NH if they have any further comments around the service standards.
4. Invite Head of Repairs Service to present performance data against appointment bookings.
5. CS to work on implementing the online appointment booking feature and improve communication around repairs.
6. KW to investigate the insurance claim process and ensure that tenants are informed of their rights under their insurance policy.
7. Arrange for residents to be involved in user acceptance testing and review of processes for the Housing Service Centre.
8. MB to explore the possibility of implementing an online portal for users to track the status of their complaints.
9. MB to investigate the specific case where a complaint response took six months and provide feedback on what went wrong and how it will be addressed in the future.
10. MB to analyse stage two complaints that were rejected and determine how many were escalated to the Ombudsman and the outcomes.
11. SU to email NH the complaints compensation enquiry which he has not heard back on. Team to also confirm that this is not a wider issue impacting more residents.
12. Schedule a sub - group meeting to discuss and finalise the key performance metrics for next year.
13. NH to contact TPAS to arrange bespoke training (in – person) for TV members.
14. Organise a sub- group meeting to review the terms of reference.
15. SU to forward NH his enquiry about bike sheds. CS to respond to the query about the availability of bike sheds or storage on his estate.
16. Reduce future agenda items so that meetings do not run over time.

## **1 Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 PC opened the meeting and welcomed members

## **2 Minutes and matters arising**

- 2.1 Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.
- 2.2 TM enquired about whether TV members will be given opportunity to quality assure the housing management service insert, expected to be published alongside Our East End newsletter. DR explained that the Council's Communication's Team is undertaking a review of its communication, once this is finalised we will be able to ascertain if an insert will be included. Once the method of communication is agreed, TV members will have input into the content to be communicated to all residents.

NH reminded members that the review includes consultation and members can provide feedback into what content is published within the insert. The consultation closes on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

Members requested NH to resend the link for the consultation.

**ACTION: NH to resend communications consultation link to members.**

- 2.3 TM re-emphasised avoiding the term 'customers' as opposed to tenants and leaseholders. GHa explained the report 'Our Customer Promise' was reflecting the language adopted within the consumer standards, but we will accept this request in discussion. Tenant/ Resident is the usual term used by colleagues and this was reflected in subsequent discussions.
- 2.4 JF highlighted point 3.3 where Cllr Kabir Ahmed mentioned the difficulty in coordinating work between Public Health and NHS. JF raised whether work can be done to address stronger joint working. DR advised discussions have already taken place with Children's Services Department and a meeting is scheduled to take place with Adult's Social Care to improve our joint working.

## **3.0 Service standards 3**

- 3.1 GHa presented the Council's 'Customer Promise to Tenants and Leaseholders'. This highlighted several key commitments around the following:
- Accessing our service

- Repairing and maintaining your home
- Your neighbourhood
- Parking
- Anti -Social behaviour
- Getting involved
- Promises to tenants
- Promises to leaseholders

### 3.2 Group discussion

Discussion ensued around members' awareness of the Council's promise and what further areas can be added. Members stated that they were not aware of the highlighted commitment from the Council and the following feedback was provided:

- To build further awareness, members advised that this information is provided to new tenants as part of their induction pack and our annual report on what our service standards are and offers
- As caretakers have information cards, GHa proposed exploring a QR code within these which direct residents to key information
- Provide an online video on customer standards
- Disseminate information on Council's WhatsApp channel
- Share information during monthly/quarterly estate inspection publications around their findings and identifying issues raised by residents. However, GHa mentioned challenges around technology to provide this level of detail.
- TM expressed concerns around holding no consultation with residents on work that was due to be scheduled on his block, i.e. windows/doors. GHa mentioned the Council has fallen behind upgrading the windows and is working with a contractor to get this up to speed, including undertaking a stock condition survey. TM also mentioned about the planned works on his block which he has not heard back on. GHa agreed to speak to colleagues in Asset Management and update TM.

**ACTION:** GHa to speak to find out the planned works on TMs block and update TM.

**ACTION:** Members were requested to email NH if they have any further comments.

### 4.0 Online Portal update

- 4.1 CS provided a background of the online portal which was formally known as MyTHH, following insourcing this was renamed to MyHome. The portal has

been growing in popularity with nearly 12,000 residents using it in March 2025.

4.2 CS highlighted the improvement made on the portal site such as a feature to upload pictures, letters and more. Feedback included the following:

- Often a specific repair is not found within the categories available. CS recognised this as an issue. CS explained selecting repairs from the category links to cost codes, hence incorrect repair selection requires amending and causes delays.
- TM explained he does not have online access and could not get his rent statement from a staff at a local library. TM was advised to visit the Residents' Hub where he can get support, alternatively email contactus or [rents@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:rents@towerhamlets.gov.uk)
- LC recommended a contact number of the operative attending the appointment is provided. CS said staff may change due to circumstances, but residents can track operatives. Further discussion took place around data on keeping to appointments; GHa said the Head of Repairs Service can be invited to present data around appointments at a future meeting.

**ACTION: NH to invite Head of Repairs Service to present performance data against appointment bookings.**

- CW reported that a new portal is being developed which will provide a wider service. This includes working on implementing the online appointment booking feature and improving communication around repairs.

**ACTION: CS to work on implementing the online appointment booking feature and improve communication around repairs.**

## **5.0 Housing Service Centre improving performance**

5.1 KW provided information on the role and function of the HSC, this included a breakdown of call volumes as per different channel available to residents.

5.2 Performance data was highlighted and KW explained an improvement plan has been initiated, measures include employing additional staff and embedding staff training.

5.3 LC enquired about the insurance process, KW reported that HSC is involved in the early process of a repair case only. Following investigation, the case is passed on to the insurance company. Tenants that want to make a claim due to damages are required to complete a CF1 form.

LC emphasised the need to give leaseholders information around their rights in relation to making insurance claims.

**ACTION: KW to investigate the insurance claim process and ensure that tenants are informed of their rights under their insurance policy.**

- 5.4 SU raised concerns about the consistency of information provided by HSC staff. TM also cited inconsistency in information provided by HSC staff as they sometimes give different responses to the same enquiry.

KW acknowledged the issue and reported regular training and quality monitoring will take place to ensure uniform service to ensure all staff provide consistent and accurate information.

- 5.5 KW confirmed that there may be opportunity to visit the HSC to do user acceptance testing and co- designing service materials before it goes live from the contact centre. This can be arranged with the TV members, including mystery shopping, meeting staff to see the systems they use and what is available for residents.

KW explained why TV members will not be able to observe staff calls/ conversation during HSC visits due to data protection.

**ACTION: Arrange for residents to be involved in user acceptance testing and review of processes for the Housing Service Centre.**

## **6.0 Sheds and Garages Update -**

- 6.1 CS provided an update on the status of garages and sheds, noting that about half of the garages are currently void and require inspection and maintenance before they can be let out.

CS also reported issues with data accuracy, noting that some sheds listed in the system may no longer exist or have been re-purposed.

## **7.0 Complaints update Q3**

- 7.1 MB provided an update on complaints performance, highlighting improvements in stage one and stage two complaint handling and the ongoing efforts to address the root causes of complaints. Key highlights included:

- **Stage One Improvements:** improvements in handling stage one complaints, with a reduction in overdue cases and efforts to address root causes.
- **Stage Two Handling:** The backlog of stage two complaints has been cleared and the team is ensuring compliance with Ombudsman guidance.
- **Tracking Actions:** MB emphasised the importance of tracking actions and ensuring that promises made in complaint responses are fulfilled. Furthermore, there is a 100% compliance with the

Ombudsman Code. Six Ombudsman determination orders were issued, these related to repairs and were historic going back to 2022.

- 7.2 As most complaints are related to repairs, Head of Repairs has met with contractors and there is an improvement plan in place.
- 7.3 MB explained that the complaint hyperlink on the website is integrated with the ICX complaints email address. Residents receive acknowledgement and correspondence through that channel. Discussion ensued around the technology for residents to be able to view the status of their complaint and if the portal could embed this feature. MB said he will be contact CIVICA (owners of icase system) to explore if the Council can have a dashboard feature so that residents can view the status of their complaint.

**ACTION: Explore the possibility of implementing an online portal for users to track the status of their complaints.**

- 7.4 SU reported that he did not receive a reply in regards to a complaints compensation enquiry. DR requested that SU emails NH to help resolve.

**ACTION: SU to email NH the complaints compensation enquiry which he has not heard back on.**

- 7.5 SU advised that to help improve the complaints process, complaints team (stage 2) should monitor the responses managed within stage 1.

Further discussion took place around complaints handing and providing data around stage 2 complaints that went to the Ombudsman and its determination findings. Also, members advised investigating complaint responses which took longer than six months, i.e. what went wrong and how to address this in future.

**ACTION: MB to investigate the specific case where a complaint response took six months and provide feedback on what went wrong and how it will be addressed in the future.**

**ACTION: MB to analyse stage two complaints that were rejected and determine how many were escalated to the Ombudsman and the outcomes**

## 8.0 Performance Q3

8.1 DR provided an update on Q3 performance

### 8.2 Table 1: Status February 2025 – monthly indicators

STATUS	Red	Amber	Green	N/A	All
No. of indicators: Feb 25	4 57%	0	1 14%	2 29%	7 100%

### 8.3 Table 2: Direction of Travel from *January 2025* – monthly indicators.

TREND	Weakened	No change	Improved	All
No. of indicators: Feb 25	1 14%	0	6 86%	7 100%

8.4 DR mentioned that as members previously stated they feel there are too many indicators at present, we will need to arrange a separate task and finish group to review this.

**ACTION:** Arrange a task and finish group to review current indicators.

## 9.0 Annual work plan update

### 9.1 NH provided the following updates:

- **Terms of reference (ToR):** A task and finish group will be arranged to review the ToR. ToR is reviewed annually and members had previously discussed participation of TRA members. NH explained that this can be reviewed but TRA representatives are also committed to other committees.
- **Damp and mould task and finish group:** A damp and mould task and finish group is expected to take place in May/June 2025.

- **Training and site visit:** Members will be given an opportunity to do estate inspection alongside housing officers.
- A menu of TPAS training opportunities was circulated. DR stated that we could liaise with TPAS to arrange a half day bespoke training. Members agreed this and proposed it takes place in person.
- **Proposed scrutiny review:** Considering members interest in vulnerability/safeguarding, LO proposed a review on safeguarding. Members agreed proposal.

**ACTION: NH to contact TPAS to arrange bespoke training (in – person) for TV members.**

## **10. AOB**

- 10.1 DR reported that the findings from the Regulator for Social Housing inspection will be published end of April 2025.
- 10.2 SU had not received a reply on his enquiry about bike sheds. DR requested that he emails NH to resolve this.

**ACTION: SU to forward NH his enquiry about bike sheds. CS to respond to the query about the availability of bike sheds or storage on his estate.**

- 10.3 Reduce future agenda items so that meetings do not run over time.

**ACTION: DR/NH to reduce future agenda items.**

## **11. Date of next meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025, 6pm -8pm**