

# **Notes from the Disability Forum Meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2pm at Blackpool Centre for Independent Living**

## **In Attendance**

6 customers

Jen Ellis – Customer Involvement and Projects Officer, Blackpool Coastal Housing

Ian Butterworth – Operations Manager, Repairs Section, Blackpool Coastal Housing

## **Apologies**

5 customers

## **1. Welcome and Introduction**

Elaine Christian welcomed attendees to the meeting and explained to new members that she is the Chair of the Forum. Attendees introduced themselves.

## **2. Repairs and Maintenance**

Ian Butterworth, Operations Manager for the Repairs Service, attended the meeting to discuss the service and answer any general queries. He explained that he manages responsive repairs and repairs to empty properties and this does generally not include replacement works. Ian Butterworth explained that the Repairs Service does not cover capital works or decent homes work etc as this is managed by the BCH Property Services section. Around 18,000 responsive repairs and 800 empty properties re-services are completed in a year and there is a budget of £3.5million to complete these.

Ian Butterworth also attended to gain feedback from attendees on relevant and specific issues in order to assist in improving and developing the service further. Positive feedback was received from attendees on the service with special reference made to the speed and efficiency of repairs completed and the hotline staff.

The Repairs Improvement Panel was discussed and attendees were invited to join; if they were unable to attend meetings information could be posted to them for their views/feedback. 3 attendees expressed an interest in joining and would like to attend the next meeting – this is to be passed to Sandy Grundy, Customer Involvement Officer for this service.

Individual issues were raised as follows:

- Brenda Giles raised an issue with the smoke alarm in her home which sounded for approximately 4 hours. The problem was heightened as only one work operative can assist for the whole of the North West.
- Pauline Richmond stated that since a new front door has been fitted to her property, she has found it difficult to get in and out due to a raised lip at the bottom of the door.

## **3. Minutes of the Last Meeting/Matters Arising**

The minutes of the last meeting were read through and agreed as a true record by attendees. The following point was updated:

- Disability Information Booklet – this will be finalised once the Head Office has relocated.

#### **4. Tenant Liaison Forum Update**

Elaine Christian explained that the Disability Forum constitution had been ratified by the Tenant Liaison Forum and therefore the Disability Forum is now an affiliated group. Members agreed that the Chair and Vice-chair (currently Elaine Christian and Irene Bishop) should attend TLF meetings and feed back to members at forum meetings.

#### **5. Tenant Project Fund**

J Ellis provided attendees with an information sheet on the Tenant Project Fund. She explained that one representative from each affiliated group will sit on the panel to assess applications and decide if funding should be granted – members agreed that Elaine Christian should sit on the panel. J Ellis asked all attendees to promote the fund and pass on the information to any community groups/agencies/individuals they felt would be interested.

#### **6. Update on Blackpool Disability Partnership**

J Ellis handed out the Terms of Reference for the Partnership and informed attendees of the next meeting due to take place on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July at the Centre for Independent Living at 1pm. 4 attendees expressed an interest in attending and J Ellis explained that the Partnership was a Council group and that transport was not provided – therefore those interested would need to make their own way to the meeting.

#### **7. Equality Audits**

J Ellis explained that the Streetscene Equality Audit had not yet commenced and a representative was unable to attend this meeting. Members stated that they would still like to be involved with this Audit and agreed a representative from the team should attend to discuss this further at a future meeting.

J Ellis also informed the group that equality audits/impact assessments from individual BCH service areas may be brought to the meetings to ensure that BCH services meet specific individual needs.

#### **8. Conferences**

J Ellis reminded attendees of the Tenant Conference due to take place on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September from 12.30pm – 7pm at Blackpool Winter Gardens. J Ellis explained that this conference will focus more on the services that BCH provide and no external agencies will be attending. Attendees felt that it may be beneficial if the group was promoted on the stall by members – J Ellis told attendees they were more than welcome to come along on the day to promote the Forum and any other involvement methods they are involved in.

J Ellis stated that the Staff Conference, due to take place in November, will be equality and diversity related. This is due to the results of the recent inspection, which identified equality and diversity as an area for improvement. J Ellis asked attendees to contact her with any ideas for the staff conference.

## **9. Any Other Business**

Attendees agreed that Blackpool Transport should be invited to attend the next Forum meeting to discuss the changes in bus routes and the accessibility of the service for disabled residents. J Ellis is to request a representatives' attendance on behalf of the Forum.

## **10. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2pm at Blackpool Centre for Independent Living, Whitegate Drive.