



## **TOWER SCRUTINY PANEL BCH Day to Day repairs Service October Report 2022**

### **Tenant Scrutiny Panel Members**

4 TOWER members undertook this scrutiny.

### **Introduction**

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves; we are TOWER Scrutiny Panel and are made up of BCH customers who volunteer our time to help develop and improve the housing services which BCH provide to their customers.

We were invited in March 2022 to carry out a review of the Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) Day to Day Repairs service. Complaints were increasing for the service and the Service Director asked the team to investigate and undertake a scrutiny exercise.

In order to help the scrutiny team complete this review of the complaints service we undertook the following:

Bench marking other housing providers:

- Six Town Housing
- Hull City Council
- Lancaster Council
- Fylde Borough Council
- Wyre Borough Council
- North East Lincolnshire Council

We interviewed the following members of BCH staff and took accompanying notes:

- BCH Repairs Trade Operative
- Planning and Customer Services Manager
- Repairs Customer Services Advisors
- Responsive Repairs and Operations Manager
- Technical Services Manager
- Repairs Responsive Planners
- Surveyed customers
- Telephone follow up with surveyed customers
- Performance Officer
- Director of Operations

TOWER reviewed a range of service related documents:

- Job specifications for Trade Operatives and Repairs Team Leader
- Repairs department structures
- Repairs job journey – on the IT system
- Complaints log and how this relates to a job
- Statement of truth procedure
- Repairs responsibility of BCH and Tenants (Handbook)
- Integration of operatives and SSP (self-service portal). Dedicated member of staff to handle and monitor per day
- How jobs get allocated to contractors and customer journey – including right first time.
- Statistics and performance for last 6 months of repairs and contractors associated with these.
- Breakdown of areas where repairs are undertaken.
- Handover process to contractors.
- How emergency repairs are responded to.

## 1. Key Observations

- We noted that it would be of benefit for trades and contractor operatives to take pictures before and after each job is done. This would safeguard team from complaints.
- Hull City Council had an excellent repairs paper document which guides tenant through reporting a repair.
- Hull City Council and Six Town Housing have a good online reporting guide for customers to use as diagram to self-report their repairs.
- We note that there needs to be a change for contractors attending customers' homes with no appointment.
- Look at remove travelling times on the daily scheduling, this will enable more jobs to be included. This will increase job allocation and flexibility.
- Need to explore further if there is scope to remove the emergency window in scheduling?
- Whilst we were observing we noted that the hotline staff were very professional and answered calls to a high standard.
- We noted that there were no inspection quality check of contractor jobs done once completed.
- Follow up customer satisfaction survey needs to be redeveloped. Scrutiny will be pleased to work with the Repairs Services on this project.
- Statement of truth works well, as customers note the issue in their own words. We note that encouraging any photographic evidence would be helpful.
- Website forms and contact details could be easier to find. Is there scope to alter these? Some further observation may need to be undertaken at a later date.
- From the customer survey it was highlighted that many customers were unaware of the repairs handbook and where this is located, (BCH website). Possibly advertise this elsewhere?
- Do the hotline follow up customers if they left a voice mail or use another mode of communications to make contact.
- Customers have noted that contractors have failed to communicate their attendance at their home to follow up work or have attended with little notice or failed to attend when scheduled to do so. How are jobs monitored?

## 2. Recommendations

In supporting continuous improvement of the service, our results show a need to explore further and scope out approaches to target the following recommendations (Recommendations are based on a priority scale of 1-3, with 1 being the highest):

1. Priority 2: Take before and after pictures of jobs where a before/after fault is visible. This also applies to contractor work.
2. Priority 2: Look at and actively test online self-repairs reporting/appointments for tenants. Consider using a QR code on jobs.
3. Priority 1: For external jobs ensure that the contractor makes every attempt to access set appointments. Make sure that follow up access is undertaken; this needs to be within a set time scale. i.e. contact customer within a set number of working days and customer kept informed. Both BCH and Contractors to ensure the portal is updated and referred to.
4. Priority 3: BCH planner to ensure that the operative's diaries are constantly checked and slots are filled as and when required, particularly to alleviate unnecessary travel time that the system automatically allows.
5. Priority 2: Contractor jobs on the portal to be checked at least weekly and to check jobs that may be missed and still outstanding. Acknowledge and finalise those as required. Contractors to be chased or requested to update the portal.
6. Priority 1: Contractors to take before and after pictures as proof of work as per recommendation 1.
7. Priority 1: If a repair appointment is cancelled via a contractor then the customer should be given as much prior notice as possible.
8. Priority 2: Customer Survey following repairs work to be redeveloped and improved. Ways of customers accessing the surveys to be reviewed, i.e text message, operatives having surveys with them to leave after job and possibly QR codes on appointment letters.
9. Priority 1: Continue to make sure that staff and contractors have ID and show this to all customers.
10. Priority 3: Reminder text set number of days before appointment? i.e. 2 days prior to appointment and on day of appointment.
11. Priority 3: Needs to be a clear means of communication between contractor and BCH repairs team by using the portal to ensure customers have been contacted and appointments have been arranged and attended. Also regular contractor meetings.
12. Priority 1-2: No access from contractors to be reported back to BCH after 3 attempts for no access for a decision/action to be taken by BCH.

13. Priority 3: Advertise the repairs handbook better to reinforce information about how repairs are undertaken. Can Trades Operatives have some copies of the handbook in their vans? Can we have a most searched for link to the BCH website to include repairs handbook. Update 06.12.22 – Completed and to be issued in new tenant comms. Hard copies available where requested.

### **3. Conclusions**

TOWER scrutiny would like to thank all parties in their help with this report. TOWER would ask the Senior Management Team and Board to consider the Recommendations in this report and feedback by end of December. Should any other information be required please contact TOWER.