



An investigation into whether the current re-let standards are good enough or are they too high.

Overview

This scrutiny exercise was produced by the newly-established Tenant-led Scrutiny Pool known as SIFT (Scrutiny, Involvement For Tenants)

The topic chosen by SIFT to scrutinise was “Are the current re-let standards good enough or are they too high?”

supported by an Independent Tenant Advisor.

The purpose of the scrutiny exercise was to:

- To assess tenant satisfaction with re-let standards and what has been offered, eg decorations standards and allowances, cleaning standards and repairs
- To consider the impact the current standard has on re-let times
- To assess what can be done to encourage tenants to leave their homes in good order
- Recommend a reasonable and cost effective standard.

Methods used to Scrutinise the Service

The methods used on this first scrutiny included:

- Briefing by service managers
- Desktop review of relevant policies and performance, including time and quality
- Visits to void properties
- Telephone Survery
-  Customer Focus Group

The main findings included:

- YHN discontinued using a re-let standard some time ago and now focus on leaving the property safe, secure, clean and tidy
- YHN and BCE sometimes have to work in very difficult circumstances and largely turnaround voids to a good standard
- Tenants have no way of knowing what to expect of the standard of their new home
- Tenants are not asked if they are happy with the standard of their new home, nor is satisfaction monitored
- Sheltered accommodation properties are routinely redecorated before let. General needs properties allocated to elderly and disabled people are not routinely redecorated as staff at BCE do not know who is going to be living in the property
- Paint packs are allocated at the discretion of the Estates Staff
- Not all tenants know that paint packs can be delivered
- Window lock keys are not always given to the new tenants.

SIFT's main recommendations are:

- A checklist of what a new tenant should expect of their property should be developed and left in the property for the tenant to check
- YHN should consider adding the question about satisfaction on the condition of the property to the 'Follow Up Visit' form staff complete during the three week post occupancy visit
- Elderly or disabled people and people with small children should be able to have paint packs delivered if needed
- More information should be offered about paint packs and the ability to have them delivered
- Estate based staff could inform BCE if a disabled person is being allocated the property (if this is known whilst the void team are still in the property). The property could then be considered for redecoration
- Some analysis of 'refusals' of properties is currently undertaken however this is being refined by staff. Performance could be reported to the Customer Service Committee on a regular basis
- YHN should consider passing the ownership of the furniture pack to the tenant after a period of time
- The Council and YHN should continue their investigation into setting up an arrangement with the utility companies to expedite work to void properties

The full report details the findings and recommendations of this scrutiny exercise, which took place during September, October and November 2018. The report can be accessed by contacting Eileen Adams at eileen.a@engage3.org, Ashleigh Fullwood (Chair) at ashleighfullwood.sift@outlook.com, telephoning free phone 0800 612 8280 or texting SIFT 07707013417