

Housing Scrutiny Committee

26 January 2016

Responsive Repairs Scrutiny 2016 – Witness Evidence

1. Synopsis

Further to the Scrutiny Initiation Document considered last year, this document sets out the background and information to assist the Housing Scrutiny Committee. The report sets the scope and current performance of the repairs service, and considers the current ways the service engages with customers and the most common feedback received. The report details improvements already in place or in progress which are aimed at addressing these issues.

2. Proposed Process for Scrutiny

The Scrutiny process is planned to consist of seven sessions between January and June. Below is the proposed timetable for evidence and a visit:

Date	Planned Activity
26 th January	Introduction - Paul Lightfoot/Matt West
29 th February	Resident Panel Evidence
Possible March Meeting (TBC)	Kwest Resident Survey Evidence Tom Barnes Customer Services Accreditation Provider Evidence
Proposed Scrutiny Visit (w/c 14 th March TBC)	Site Visit Brewery Road Office, Stores, Joinery Shop and Training Centre
19 th April	Camden Council Witness Evidence
26 th May	Draft Recommendations
June	Final Report

3. Current Service Delivery

There are approximately 55,000 repairs reported annually which are completed by the Repairs Team's 105 in-house trade staff along with support from contractors where demand requires. The repairs range from 2 hour Emergency work such as no power to the property, 24 hour Urgent work such as repair to a door, 20 calendar day non-urgent work such as re-plastering a wall and high value works over £5,000 such as renew a boundary wall.

The delivery of the repairs service (excluding Gas and Estate Maintenance) consists of seven teams located at 33-37 Brewery Road which are:-

Housing Direct – taking telephone calls reporting all repairs and making appointment times with tenants.

Schedule Planning Team – receive the appointed repairs from Housing Direct and allocate each job to trade staff and contractors.

Technical Surveying Team – attend properties to diagnose and scope up more complex works to be completed such as damp and structural defects within properties.

Direct Works Trade Staff – multi-trade teams attend agreed appointment timeslots with the tenant to complete the reported repair.

The following three teams, based at Brewery Road, support the management of the repairs and maintenance service and are excluded from this review.

Legal Disrepair Team – work with the council's legal team to manage any disrepair claims by surveying the property and manage any repairs identified.

Customer Excellence Team – deal with complaints and enquiries from tenants, residents, leaseholders, councillors, and MPs for all services delivering repairs and liaise with the corporate complaints team.

Procurement and Contract Management Team – procure contracts and monitor the delivery of these to ensure value for money is achieved.

4. Current Performance

Our customer satisfaction levels have been monitored by Kwest, a business which specialises in collecting survey information, who have a large team of directly employed, highly trained interviewers with wide experience in repairs. They complete approximately 3,000 surveys per month. Below is the percentage satisfaction levels achieved for the whole repairs service for 2015/16.

April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	Year to date
73.0 %	72.0%	70.0%	70.0%	73.0%	70.0%	73.0%	73.0%	72.88%

Satisfaction with the actual quality of the repair is higher and measured as part of the same survey.

April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	Year to date
91 %	90%	92%	92%	90%	91%	91%	91%	91%

We also measure the percentage of repairs that are completed correctly the first time.

April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	Year to date
84 %	83%	82%	83%	83%	85%	85%	84%	84%

5. How the service learns from casework and customer feedback

It is important that the Repairs Team listens to tenants and residents regarding the service they receive and use this information to target areas of improvement. It is also important that given the scope of the service this engagement is with as many residents, from varied experience and background, as possible to provide an accurate image of the service.

The service engages with tenants and residents in several ways, such as attendance at local Tenant and Resident meetings, case work meetings with councillors, and has established repairs reference groups to specifically consider service improvements.

The outcomes of investigations following complaints and data from the independent satisfaction surveys provides additional useful information.

The feedback received over the last 12 months from the tenants and resident's experience of the service has been constructive, giving a clear direction to what changes the service users feel needs to occur. Regular themes are included below and have been categorised.

[illegible]

[illegible]

I	A joiner shop and training centre has been built in Tufnell Park which has been in operation since October 2015. The joinery Shop now provides the entire bespoke joiner required such as doors and windows, with the future option to provide this service externally to customers if the council wish to pursue this option. The training centre has recently provided a successful taster session in joinery to eight Year 11 school girls from Elizabeth Garret Anderson School. Further sessions are planned in for other schools to attend in 2016.
J	The Handyman service that was previously provided by an external contractor has now been brought back in-house and managed by the repairs teams. Our handyman service is designed to assist customers in carrying out small jobs around the home. They provide the materials, e.g. curtain poles, door chains, locks etc. and we will provide the skilled person to carry out these jobs.

7. Repairs improvement plan 2016/17

Further changes are planned within the next financial year; these are part of the Repairs and Maintenances Business Plan and will form targets for managers' and teams' Personal Development Reviews. Where possible they are linked to addressing the common issues outlined above.

Ref	Change to be Implemented	Area Affected
L	New IT System	1/2/3/4/5/6/7/9/10/11/ 12/13/14/15/16/17/18
M	Online Repairs Reporting	2/3/4/5/6/7/8/10/14
N	Apprenticeship Programme	8/12/15/17/18
O	Review of 'Out of Hours' Repairs Service	1/2/3/5/6/7/8/11/13/15/16/18
P	Transport Review	1/12/15/16/18

New IT system

Since the service came back in-house in August 2014, it was clearly evident that the current IT system "Callsys" is not fit for the council's purposes. Although an improvement plan is in place to improve the system, its capabilities to deliver the full requirements for the future cannot be realised to assist staff in providing an excellent service to our customers. The feedback from tenants and residents, councillors and staff have been used to specify the IT requirements. A procurement exercise has taken place and a new IT supplier "Oneserve" has been appointed. A project team is working to have the new system operational from the autumn of 2016.

Some of the key features of the new system are:-

A true diagnostic system to enable Housing Direct staff to consistently diagnose repairs correctly. The questions within the diagnostic system will be designed in conjunction with the trade staff that will lead to a priority and schedule of rate for the individual repair taking into account vulnerability of tenants.

Appointment times will still be made on the initial call with the tenant reporting their repair, but the improvement will be that the appointment allocated will be based on the resources available to carry out that appointment. This will improve appointments being made and kept, reducing further telephone calls having to be made to tenants.

The current system is not automated; it relies on staff allocating the 55,000 jobs manually. The new IT system will provide an automated allocation to trade staff based upon their skill set, vastly reducing manual intervention and getting the right trade to attend the repair. The automation will also reduce costs for service.

The schedule planning team will have improved visual status of jobs enabling them to improve communication with trade staff and tenants, ensuring timely completion of the repair leading to the primary goal of improving performance and customer satisfaction.

The members of the trade staff will be issued with one job at a time through the use of the mobile technology ensuring the control of jobs is maximised. Trade staff will have the ability to access the system to order materials, make and book appointments for follow-on works and raise further repairs where required with the tenant whilst in their home. This will bring efficiencies through reducing the number of telephone calls back to the planning team and by providing real time information.

Online repairs reporting

Property services have been working with the council's IT department to introduce reporting of repairs through the internet, this is expected to go live during 2016. This will make it easier for some tenants to report non-emergency repairs 24/7. The tenants reporting the repair will be able to make their own appointment to suit their needs. At the point of launch this new service will be publicised through multimedia channels and roadshows.

Apprenticeship Programme

When the repairs service transferred back into the council it came without any apprentice programme in place. Is it important that we have investment in the people of Islington. It has been agreed that ten apprenticeship placements will be available for school leavers to apply for in 2016.

Links have been created with the council's Business Support team (BEST) to offer work based experience and training placements. We have one trainee starting a 12 week course in with the direct works team in February 2016. This gives the individual an experience of working in a trade environment with the possibility of applying for the future full apprenticeship programme.

Review the “Out of Hours” repairs service

Property Services provide an Out of Hours service for repairs where staff work from 4pm to midnight Monday to Friday, 7am to midnight Saturday and Sundays, and on a call out basis throughout the night mainly dealing with emergency repairs. This is a valued service by the tenants; consultation with the tenants and staff is planned to take place in the last quarter of 2016.

Transport review

The service uses 120 vehicles that have imprest stock on them to complete responsive repairs. A full review of type and size of vehicle will take place. This review aims are to reduce non-productive time, improve first visit fix and reduce costs of the service.

Date 13th January 2016

Report author: Paul Lightfoot
Email: paul.lightfoot@islington.gov.uk
Tel: 020 7527 7326