

Name:	Resident Report - Service Improvement Forum (SIF)
Date of Meeting:	13 June 2023
Time of Meeting:	10am
Location:	Hybrid – 21 Bond Street, Dewsbury & Teams

Present:	
Kevin Farrell (KF)	TPAS (Chair)
Eunice Clarkson (EC)	Resident
Maureen Kershaw (MK)	Resident
Nicola Sharp (NS)	Resident
Christopher Sharp (CS)	Resident
Jude Thompson (JT)	Resident
Deborah Pepper (DP)	Resident
Alicia Ridout (ADR)	Board Observer
Lisa Stead (LS)	Tenant Engagement Officer
Christine Fox (CF)	Director of Customer & Community Services
Epiphany Kidd (EK)	Head of Customer & Community Services
Jane Grace (JG)	Head of Business Assurance
Kevin McAllister (KM)	Head of Asset Investment
Richard Baggott (RB)	Head of Change, Business Intelligence & Communications
Dipa Mistry (DM)	Business Assurance Officer (Minutes)
Apologies:	
Hina Gillani (HG)	Resident
Leah Montia-Thomas (LMT)	Board Observer

Actions Arising from this Meeting		
1.	DM to follow up to see whether we are able to report on whether an appointment was given when a repair was first reported	DM
2.	LS to get back to MK on what happens with surveys and reminder texts for those who've reported a repair in communal areas	LS
3.	Acknowledge report in 2 days and tell who CHO is – DM to explore this and report back to LS to circulate amongst SIF	DM
4.	DM to liaise with RB on whether an exemption to the “over surveying feature” can be made for transactional surveys.	DM

1. Introductions and Minutes of June “Resident Report” SIF

Kevin Farrell introduced the purpose of the meeting:

- to update members on the performance against the SIF priorities for last year's change plan
- to confirm what SIF agreed as their priorities for this year's change plan
- to look at the consumer self-assessments to ensure compliance
- to look at performance against connect commitments for 2022-23 and to decide what judgments are made.

The minutes of March Action Planning SIF were agreed as a true record.

Actions arising - all actions were completed or on the agenda for discussion. Updates were given on the following actions:

Action 4 -the ASB Deep Dive to be shared in some form: EK updated that the SharePoint data highlighted issues with the data which meant we aren't able to provide anything meaningful from that. HF as the new Community Coordinator is reviewing and coproducing the ASB toolkit, procedures, and letters. This will be brought back to the SIF along with this Deep Dive. This is likely to be in the new year due to the volume work.

Action 5 – LS to contact Money Matters Team to look into what has gone wrong there and ask them to email JT: CF updated that the web form wasn't being directed to the MM mailbox. We investigated it and 10 queries were impacted. 6 were already supported so had been picked up through other ways and the others we contacted. We checked the other web forms for other services, and these were going to the correct mailboxes. CF advised that we had 369 Money Matter referrals in 22/23. Of these we attempted contact within one day of referral in 97% of cases. We made actual contact with 88% of referrals within one day showing that operationally the service has been highly responsive.

2. Change Plan: 2022-23 and 2023-24: RB, JG, KM

- a) *Richard provided a full year update on SIF priorities for 2022-23*
- b) *Jane confirmed the chosen SIF priorities for 2023-24*
- c) *Briefing from Kevin McAllister to help SIF understand the change plan actions around compliance*

2a. Full year update on SIF priorities for 2022-23

RB went through the full year Change Plan update. RB explained that good progress has been made on the 2022/23 change plan actions but areas such as rent recovery continue to be a focus.

RB explained that we are rolling back on surveys as 26+ different ones were sent last year. This is being scaled back particularly in the context of Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Measures (TSMs). TSMs have started to be rolled out and the response has been good so far.

Neighbourly Places, Customer Care and Resident Voices Strategies are being merged this year.

No comments or questions were raised.

2b. Chosen SIF priorities for Change Plan 2023-24

JG explained that this year is the year of completion in the Change Plan. The SIF priorities for 2023-24 had been circulated. CF had explained this was a result of separate meeting with SIF members and wanted to check it reflected what was agreed.

SIF agreed the priorities.

2c. Change plan actions around compliance

KM explained there is a separate customer safety team to ensure we're doing what we can to ensure our tenants are safe and ran through some of the areas of works they deal with. KM explained there is more being introduced all the time in terms of regulation and best practice. Two examples last year were to install CO monitors and fire detection alarms where required. Smoke detection installations was commenced by Connect roughly five or six years before this regulation came into place this year.

EC asked why CO weren't wired at the same time as fire detection. KM explained that the CO alarm regulation only came in last year. We hadn't traditionally put them in as our properties tend to be low risk. The only way to reach compliance in time was to put a battery-operated monitor in as you don't need skilled technicians to do it. In the long term the intention is to put a hard wired one in. This will be done in the next round of electrical tests from 2027 onwards.

Discussion on whether the CO alarms are faulty and whether they had been placed in the correct places especially as sometimes it means tenants are having to climb on things to switch it off. KM explained that the alarms are of high quality from a reputable manufacturer and tested to British standards. We understand the anxiety it causes tenants and the work it causes Connect. As such when an alarm is reported to Connect as having been triggered, we investigate the cause and lessons are learnt with regards as to whether the alarm is faulty or whether placement is an issue. Generally, the alarms tend to be triggered by tenants' own gas cookers or too large pans. Other things such as painting can trigger it.

RB – clarified that if the CO alarms do go off then tenants should be calling British Gas to get it checked rather than climb on things to get it to switch it off.

NS asks how often fire detection tested. It was clarified that Sure do this when boilers are checked.

KM explained 4 actions related to compliance in this year's change plan –

- 1) To use the new software to improve reporting
- 2) To explore the development of in-house planned maintenance team
- 3) To continue the development of a task force to tackle damp, mould, and condensation. A brief presentation was given on how damp and mould was dealt with, what has changed since and our more proactive approach and more robust follow up work.
- 4) Connect are aiming to check communal doors. This is not mandatory, but we are choosing to do it for customer safety.

These actions will be tracked, and we'll be giving an update in 6 months.

CF checked with SIF members that their actions were on there. They confirmed they were.

3. Performance report: JG/RB

Summary of the latest performance report including Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) survey results

Update on TSMs RB. TSMs went live on 1st April. RB summarised the approach, which involves sending the surveys to a 12th of our tenants, at random, each month over 12 months. At the moment we have achieved the 40% of the annual requirement set by the regulator.

It was explained that we are expecting a drop in satisfaction scores as generally we know if you fill in a survey yourself you are likely to score lower than if someone calls you. However, the advantage is we will get more honest feedback and each piece of feedback is looked at.

We're currently getting some really positive feedback from tenants and our scores are currently in line with the sector benchmarked figures.

Quarter 4 performance- JG

JG went through the performance for quarter 4 for evictions, tenancy turnover, customer satisfaction with Connect, Net promoter score, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and rent arrears. Some areas for improvement were also outlined.

CF noted that reports of ASB tends to increase in summer months and that our response rates are good on ASB cases.

4. Consumer Standard Self-Assessments: DM

Annual self-assessments to demonstrate compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's four Consumer Standards: Tenant Involvement an Empowerment Standard; Home Standard; Tenancy Standard; Neighbourhoods and Community Standard.

DM explained that the Regulator of Social Housing has four Consumer Standards and the assessment shows that Connect is compliant. DM gave a presentation that summarised the detail provided in the self-assessment documents that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. This included points that demonstrate compliance and actions for improvement.

DM asked if SIF had any queries or comments relating to the standards. JT advised she has some points of improvement and will email them outside of the meeting as she didn't feel it was worth mentioning in the meeting.

SIF agreed with Connect's self-assessment, which found that Connect is compliant with the current Consumer Standards.

5. Resident Report: EK

Looking at the Residents Report 2022

SIF were asked if they want any changes to the format for this year's report. How do we publish? Include an update about the new Connect Commitments and how they were created? Any volunteers to help with the draft?

EK explained that there was no change on what we're reporting on as it will include the old Connect Commitments, but we can add a summary of new ones.

EK also advised she will be asking if anyone would like to assist with this. LS advised that there is a potential new member who said she would like to volunteer to help with it.

EK and LS spoke about the things we're doing to raise awareness about tenant involvement as it is important people need to know about the work even if they don't want to be involved.

SIF agreed that this year's Resident's Report will remain the same as last year with a few tweaks and include a summary of the new Connect Commitments and will be issued in the same format as previous years in terms of digital and paper forms available.

6. Scrutiny recommendation updates from Audit Tracker: JG

Update following ARMC meeting in April 2023 regarding the 6 recommendations made by the Scrutiny Panel following the completion of their latest review.

JG summarised the recent Scrutiny Panel report with the key question being to examine how EODs drive service improvement and really make a difference for Connect.

JG stated that ARMC agreed with this as a priority for Connect and that five of the six recommendations should be agreed and implemented. These five are on the tracker which was circulated.

The one not on the tracker is the recommendation referring to a “Category 0”. RB didn’t agree to this one as it goes against the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code.

However, LS explained that as part of the research into best practice it was discovered that Jonny Johnson does have an equivalent to “Category 0” and so before confirming a decision on this recommendation ARMC would like to know why this is. LS is following up with them to find out whether it’s an oversight or whether they have got round the code somehow.

JG explained that the more detailed plan with dates will go to ARMC.

7. 2022-23 Performance Against the Connect Commitments: DM

The draft judgements for 2022-23 were presented for SIF to decide on the final judgements.

This is the last year of these commitments and we’re currently measuring against the new commitments along with the TSMs. It was explained that the draft judgements have been updated since the pack went out so there will be some slight changes.

Repairs Commitment

The 15 working days target for repairs was discussed as being unachievable and Martyn Broadest (Director of Home) came to the action planning SIF to explain why this was changing from 15 working days to 21 days.

100% of gas repairs had been completed within 24 hours (where necessary). The contractor SURE moved to a new system in September and is still retrieving data from this. However, since September they have completed 100% in 24hours. Historically they have always achieved 100% and we would have been alerted if there had been a failure in this area, so it was felt reasonable to rate this as a green by SIF.

DM explained that it wasn’t possible to report on whether an appointment was given when the repair was first reported. **Action 1 – DM to follow up to see if this can be built back into reporting.**

MK asked what happens to those repairs reported in communal areas. She often reports repairs for communal areas but doesn’t receive any feedback or a satisfaction survey. **Action 2 - LS to get back to MK on what happens with surveys and reminder texts for those who’ve reported a repair in communal areas.**

All SIF members agreed the judgements/ratings proposed, of which there were four green, two amber, four red and one where data was not available.

Well-Managed Estates Commitment

Resident estate inspections have been carried out where there is a service charge by the estates team and at some of those where there isn't a service charge by Community Housing Officers (CHOs) however, this has been partial and not across the board.

LS explained that there was an incorrect assumption that the commitment to inspect estates with volunteers was suspended but it wasn't as it hadn't been brought back to SIF to ask about the suspension. She explained how since the start of these commitments the way in which inspections are carried out has never really worked. It has gone between different teams and currently this is being reviewed in the Neighbourhood Plans.

All SIF members agreed the judgements/ratings proposed, of which one was amber and two red.

Landlord Services Commitment

SIF members agreed the ratings proposed, both commitments were judged green.

Standard of Your New Home Commitment

DM explained that the satisfaction surveys had not been sent out for part of the year but have recommenced in March 2023.

Of the three commitments, two were judged green, and one judged amber.

Anti-social and Nuisance Behaviour Commitment

DM noted the reporting for 'Acknowledge report in 2 days and tell who CHO is' haven't been built back into the new system and EK added that the focus on improvements have been around being able to report on TSMs. However, the information is difficult to extract but is available. **Action 3 - DM to follow up to see if we can extract this and report this back to LS to circulate with SIF.**

SIF members agreed the judgements/ratings proposed. One was rated green and three amber and one there was no data available at the time of reporting.

Listening to Tenants Commitment

DM advised that the 'What Connect Tenants Want' report was not produced for 2021-22 due to turnover in the Business Assurance Team but it was agreed that the information for 2022-23 would be available in time for the SIF away day in July 2023.

SIF members agreed with the ratings proposed with two commitments rated green, one amber and two rated red.

Aids and Adaptations Commitment

DM explained that while transactional surveys had been sent out for Aids and Adaptations the return was too low to consider to be significant data. Quite a few had been blocked by the over-surveying function. **4 - DM action to liaise with RB on whether an exemption can be made for transactional surveys.**

SIF members agreed with the other judgements/ratings proposed. Of the four commitments judged, two green, two amber and for one no data available.

Planned Works Commitment

SIF members agreed the judgements/ratings proposed, of which three were green and one rated red.

Across all Commitments, there were a total of 16 green, 10 amber, and nine red judgements and three where no data available.

CF commented that while it is clear that we have not performed as we would have liked on these commitments. However, despite some of these not being a commitment next year we will still be working to improve performance in these areas.

8. Policy Approval: JG

Standard agenda item, no policies due for approval

9. Any Other Business: KM

LS stated that the SIF away day is on 21st July 2023 at Thrive Creative Space, Dewsbury, 21 Bond Street, WF13 AX. An email has been sent to members with the details. Resident priorities and the next topic for Scrutiny Panel will be selected on the day as well.

LS gave an update that the second official meeting of Customer Task and Finish Group has taken place. MK came to the most recent meeting. A deep dive on complaints and EODs took place. An action that has resulted from this is to deliver customer care training for all staff.

KF asked if the next meeting should be online or in person. SIF decided it should be in person.

10. Date of Next Meeting

12th September 2023, 10am - 12.30pm

Thrive Creative Space, 21 Bond Street, Dewsbury, WF13 1AX