

Contacting the Association

Tenant Scrutiny Report

2018



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Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by the Tenant Scrutiny Group of West of Scotland Housing Association. We would like to thank those tenants and staff who have helped us by completing surveys, answering questions, and providing advice and support throughout the process.

1/ Introduction

The Tenant Scrutiny Group aims to review the performance of West of Scotland Housing Association in particular service areas and make recommendations as to how services can be improved based on our findings.

The Group has been working hard over the last 8 months to undertake a review of how the Association responds to contact from tenants, and in the report below you will find out what activities we have undertaken to review this, what we found out, and our recommendations for the Association to consider which we believe will lead to an improved service for tenants.

The Scrutiny group is made up of the following members:

- Anne Young
- Lynne Clark
- Janette Oliver
- Agnes Docherty
- Gerry Murphy
- Peter Murphy
- Rosemary Murphy
- Rose Friel
- Josephine Coghlan
- Margaret Ritchie
- Margaret Storrie
- Lynne Di Folco
- Raymond Baxter

2/ Tenant Scrutiny – background

Tenant Scrutiny aims to give tenants more power in holding their landlord to account for their decisions, performance and conduct. Changes to regulation in Scotland following the introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the independent Scottish Housing Regulator, require landlords to be more proactive in self regulation and to involve tenants in the scrutiny process.

There is now increased focus on housing organisations carrying out self-assessment, and reviewing their housing services to evaluate how well they are doing, and to plan improvements.

3/ Tenant Scrutiny at West of Scotland Housing Association

A group of tenants, some from the Tenant Advisory Group, and others who responded to an article in Westworld attended a number of training sessions which looked at:

- What is tenant scrutiny and why do it?
- What scrutiny activity has been undertaken with tenants from West of Scotland to date
- The different approaches to tenant scrutiny that can be used
- Learning lessons from other landlords

Following these sessions the Tenant Scrutiny Group was formed, with all those who undertook the training agreeing to become part of the Group.

4/ Contacting the Association – Planning for Scrutiny

The first task for the Scrutiny Group was identifying an area of service to scrutinise for our first activity. Based on the training that we had undertaken we knew there were a number of considerations before deciding on a service area to look at including:

- Performance information
- Complaints received
- Customer satisfaction performance
- Any view from the Housing Regulator
- Any view expressed by the Management of West of Scotland
- Views from members of our Group.

The Group were aware that there had been a number of complaints regarding the ability of tenants to contact the Association by phone. The Group also noted that they were keen to begin their scrutiny activities with a practical exercise. It was therefore agreed that the Group would undertake a Mystery Shopping exercise, contacting the Association by phone or through social media to assess the response standards.

5/ Scrutinising the Service

The Group agreed that they would undertake the following activities to assess how well WSHA responds to tenants contact:

- Review of customer satisfaction information
- Undertake Mystery Shopping training and then carry out a Mystery Shopping exercise
- If findings required it, compare how WSHA responds to customer enquiries and how this compares to other landlords.

To support the above the Group worked with WSHA staff to develop a number of realistic scenarios that shoppers could use to contact each part of the Association. These scenarios can be found in Appendix. The contact sheet that was used to record findings can be seen in Appendix 2.

6/ The Findings

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

WSHA undertakes monthly customer satisfaction monitoring via an independent contractor called Research Resource. 50 customers are contacted on a monthly basis and asked about their views of the service they have received from WSHA. The first seven questions of this survey relate to 'contacting the Association'. The group reviewed the results of the surveys undertaken between March 2018 and May 2018.

The group noted that during this period 137 tenants were spoken to by WSHA staff, and all but one was either very, or fairly, satisfied with the service received.

Mystery Shopping

The results of the Mystery Shopping exercise were:

- Just over 50 separate contacts over period of 4 weeks either through phone calls or via facebook
- Generally very positive results – staff helpful and polite
- Some occasions where calls were not answered – all at lunch time
- Small number of occasions where voicemails received no response
- Small number of occasions where a response was promised within a timescale and not achieved

Some of the shoppers did note that from previous contact with the Association they felt that staff needed to listen more to what tenants were saying, but agreed this was not backed up by the findings of the exercise.

Heading	Yes	No	%
Call or social media enquiry answered promptly	31	6	84
Enquiry answered satisfactorily	28	0	100
Treated appropriately	28	0	100

Please note, that not all contacts resulted in response sheet being completed.

7/ Recommendations

Based on the findings above, after consideration the Scrutiny Group would make the following recommendations to WSHA as to how the service delivered to tenants could be improved.

Recommendation	Why are the Group making this recommendation?
Staff should be reminded that voicemails should be checked regularly, and updated when on leave.	The Group were aware of a number of examples where staff members had been on annual leave and tenants left messages that received no response.
Staff should be reminded to set realistic timescales to respond to customers with further information.	During the Mystery Shopping exercise there were a number of occasions where callers were advised they would receive a call back with further information, but given no timescale for this. This meant tenants expectations were not being managed appropriately.
The Association should consider holding the Staff Training sessions on a fixed day of the month, each month.	Several members of the Group had on occasion been inconvenienced as a result of the office closing at 12 30 with no advance notice other than a note on the door. The group felt that if this was at a fixed time each month tenants would be come aware of this.
Where possible, contact with the Association made through social media, should be responded to via social media.	The Group felt that if this was a tenants chose method of contact WSHA staff should aim to respond in the same manner.
The Association should consider options to support tenants who work in full time 9 – 5 jobs to contact the Association.	As part of the Mystery Shopping exercise there were several examples where tenants made contact at lunch time and did not get a response. As the shopper in question worked full time this limited the ability to speak to WSHA staff.

8/ Next Steps

The Scrutiny Group would be grateful if the Association could consider the report and the recommendations contained and provide a response to the Group for each one, setting out whether it is accepted or not. Where the Association does not accept

a recommendation we would be keen to understand why not, so that we can give consideration to how else we can make required improvements.

Once the recommendations are agreed we would expect the Association to develop an action plan which will show how each recommendation will be implemented, with appropriate timescales against each, so that we can monitor progress. We would hope that this action plan is monitored not only by ourselves, but by the Senior Management of the Association.

9 Appendix 1

Scrutiny Scenarios

Team	Reasons for calling
Repairs/ Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When am I due a new kitchen / bathroom / boiler / windows?• Can you tell me when my gas service is due?• Could you send me some information about the Right to Repair?• Can you send me out a compensation form please?• Can I report a street light out to you?
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you tell me what my rent balance is?• Can you tell me when the grass cutting will next be done in my area?• Can you tell me how I put my name on the transfer list?• Could you send me out a complaints leaflet please• I want to put in a new kitchen – do I need permission?• Do you have any houses in Shawlands?• Can I put my daughters name down for a house?
Welfare Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When is Universal Credit being rolled out in Glasgow?• Could you send me a leaflet out about Universal Credit?• Could you give me the phone number for the DWP that I can speak to about Universal Credit please• How do I apply to the Scottish Welfare Fund?
Community and Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could you tell when the summer programme will be released?• Could you tell me a bit about the Money Advice Service?• Could you tell me a bit about the Energy Advice Service?• Could you send me out some information about the Handyperson Service?
Facebook Enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you tell me how I apply for a house?• Do you have any houses in Shawlands?• When is the new development in Troon being let?
Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you send me a housing application form for my daughter?• Can I speak to Geraldine Connolly please?• Can you a copy of the GDPR statement?• Can you tell me where I can find the Board papers to read?

Appendix 2

 West of Scotland Housing Association	Mystery Shopping Project Assessing Customer Service April 2018
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Please provide as much information as possible. If as a group you are going to recommend changes to the service provided it will be helpful to have the data and information to back up our recommendations.

Feedback Form

Name	
Date of contact	
Time of contact	
Type of contact	Phone call/ visit to office / social media

Phone System

Why did you call? (please refer to your scenario sheet)

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What option did you choose?

(you will be presented with 5 options when you ring the West of Scotland Number)

- | |
|---|
| 1 – Repairs – Repairs / Heating repairs
2 – Housing Team – Ayrshire / Lanarkshire / Glasgow
3 – Community and Support Services
4 – Welfare Rights
5 – Other |
|---|

Please circle appropriate answer

Was you call answered promptly? Yes / No

Did the officer identify themselves? Yes / No

Was the person able to answer your enquiry? Yes / No

If not, did they offer to look into your issue further and come back to you? Yes / No

Did they come back to you within an agreed timescale? Yes / No

Did the officer transfer you to someone else? Yes / No

Was this person able to respond to your enquiry? Yes / No

Did you reach an answering machine when you called? Yes / No

Did someone respond to the message you left? Yes / No

Did you feel you were treated appropriately during the call? Yes / No

Please explain why you answered this way.

Do you have any other comments that will help assist the scrutiny group in making recommendations?

Social media

Did someone respond to you in a timely manner? Yes / No

Were they polite and respectful? Yes / No

Did they answer your enquiry? Yes / No

Do you have any other comments that will help assist the scrutiny group in making recommendations?

Visit to Office

Did someone respond to you in a timely manner? Yes / No

Were they polite and respectful? Yes / No

Did they answer your enquiry? Yes / No

Do you have any other comments that will help assist the scrutiny group in making recommendations?

Follow Up

If as part of your call, someone had offered to post something out to you, or to call you back, can you confirm if this happened?

Yes / No