



Horizon Residents Improvement Group

Repairs Service Satisfaction Scrutiny Project Interim Report July 2020

The Resident Improvement Group would like to thank all Horizon staff and Tenants Information Service, who assisted and supported us to carry out this scrutiny project.

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1. Introduction

Horizon Housing Association's Resident Improvement Group (RIG) is pleased to provide the following interim report on our scrutiny of tenant satisfaction with the Association's Repair Service.

2. Role of the Residents Improvement Group

The Residents' Improvement Group (RIG) is a group of Horizon tenants who work together to look at the services provided to tenants by Horizon. This is known as "*tenant scrutiny*". Our overall aims are to:

- Learn more about Horizon's policies, procedures and service delivery;
- Understand how services are provided to tenants;
- Find out tenants' views on the services provided;
- Consider what works well and what could be improved; and
- Make recommendations for changes or improvements to Horizon's Senior Management Team and Board.

We carry out our work through tenant led inspections, interviewing and shadowing staff, reviewing information about Horizon services, talking to other tenants and reviewing housing and service standards set by the Scottish Government in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) and expectations of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

The **Tenants Information Service (TIS)** provides the RIG with independent advice, training and support to assist us in our work and Horizon staff members support us through organising and hosting our meetings and providing the information we require to review services and standards.

3. The Scrutiny Project

This scrutiny project focussed on a review of tenant satisfaction with Horizon's repair service. Our work to date has included:

- a. Consideration of the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes with a focus on Outcome 5: repairs, maintenance and improvements.

Social Landlords manage their businesses so that tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

We understand this describes how Horizon should meet its statutory duties on repairs and provide repairs, maintenance and improvement services that safeguard the value of the housing assets and take account of the wishes and preferences of their tenants.

This could include setting repair priorities and timescales; setting repair standards such as getting repairs done right, on time, first time; and assessing tenant satisfaction with the quality of the services they receive.

- b. A review of tenant satisfaction information on the SHR tenant portal, which shows that although satisfaction with the overall service has improved in recent years from **83.9%** in 2016/17 and 2017 /18 to **88.9%** in 2018/19:
 - Tenant satisfaction with the repairs service reduced from 90.7% in 2016/17 and 2017/18 to **85.7%** in 2018/19.
 - Tenant satisfaction with the repairs service in 2018/19 at Horizon was lower than the Scottish National Average of **91.7%**.
- c. A Horizon survey of tenants in 2020, which shows a further reduction in repairs service satisfaction to **82.6%**.

It had been our intention to conduct our own tenant survey as part of this work however the arrival of COVID – 19 and its subsequent impacts, meant that we were unable to proceed as envisaged.

However, as Horizon had commissioned Research Resource to carry out a min tenant satisfaction survey, the team incorporated our survey questions into their work and report.

We would like to take the opportunity to Research Resource for their assistance.

- d. A review of the complaints received by Horizon, which shows:
- A slight reduction in the number of repairs service complaints from **127** in 2018 /19 to **124** in 2019/20.
 - Complaints received in 2019/20 were:
 - Failed Action **57**
 - Standard of Work **21**
 - Missed Appointment **13**
 - Communication **11**
 - Staff Attitude **7**
 - Staff Error **6**
 - Contractor Attitude **4**
 - Policy **3**
 - Mis Apt St **1**
 - Failed Promise **1**

Note:

RIG members are pleased to see even a small reduction in repairs service complaints received.

RIG considers although all complaints are valid and require Horizon's attention, it is the **Failed Action, Standard of Work, Missed Appointments'** and issues with **Communication** that lead to the lower levels of tenant satisfaction with the service.

- e. RIG discussions and sharing of experiences of the repairs service, along with anecdotal information from neighbours and other tenants.

4. Findings

Bringing together the information gathered in our work detailed above, the following details our findings to date:

Review of Complaints	
1	We consider that receiving and dealing with complaints provides a positive way for Horizon to review and continue to improve its services.
2	We consider it is positive that complaints have reduced.
3	A high number of complaints in 2018 /19 were about the bathroom contract. We are pleased to see this contract has now been terminated.
4	Horizon does not record whether tenants report repairs directly to Horizon or to Link. However, many of the communication complaints relate to when Link sub - contractors are responsible for work, with whom Horizon does not have a direct working relationship.
5	In terms of new build repairs, we note that as properties are built via Almond Housing Association. This means that Horizon does not have direct contact or contracts with the developers or their sub - contractors. This has led to issues for tenants and Horizon, with people unaware of or in control of “defects” timescales and repair responsibilities.
6	Some complaints are about the services provided by Gas Sure, particularly around delays in sourcing parts for boiler repairs.
7	In some cases, the property maintenance officer is not chasing up repairs to ensure they are carried out.
8	There is an East / West split on types of complaints, with more complaints in the East for failed action with standard of workmanship in West being higher.
9	Horizon does not post inspect work carried out.
10	There sometimes seems to be poor information to and from Horizon and contractors.

11	In terms of complaints regarding drainage issues, we note that Horizon does not have a contract with this company, therefore they cannot or do not always deal with issues within Horizon target timescales.
12	In some cases, property services paperwork is not completed on time.
13	Appointments are missed, with both tenants and contractors at fault.

Tenant Satisfaction	
1	In 2018 / 19, 85.7% of tenants were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service provided by Horizon. This is lower than the national Scottish average of 91.7% .
2	In 2019 /20 the level of satisfaction with the service fell to 82.6% .
3	Ease of reporting a repair, helpfulness of Horizon staff, being told when workers will arrive to carry out work, being able to get work done at a convenient time, worker attitude and tidiness all score between 92% and 97% tenant satisfaction which we consider is positive.
4	Tenant satisfaction is lower with time taken to get work started 88% , overall quality of the work 81% , speed of completion of the work 79% , and repair being done “right first time” 77% .
5	30.4% of repairs carried out during 2019 /20 had previously been carried out in tenants’ homes, 71.4% being repeat repairs in a less than 7 - month period.
Seeking Tenants Views	
1	The RIG understands that not all tenants return the repairs satisfaction cards, which would assist Horizon check what is working well and what could be improved on a regular basis.
2	Horizon issues a repairs satisfaction card to tenants after work is carried out.
3	The 2020 Survey indicates tenants would prefer to provide satisfaction information via the card as per current practice.

5. Our Recommendations

Based on our findings, group discussions, personal and anecdotal evidence, the RIG would like the Horizon Board and Senior Management Team to consider the following recommendations.

Recommendations	
1	All Horizon staff and Board members continue to work to improve the delivery of the repairs service to increase tenant satisfaction and reduce complaints received.
2	Horizon establishes a system that identifies whether tenants have reported the repair to Horizon, Link or Gas Sure and uses this and follow up information to track the repair journey and satisfaction levels. The aim of this is to assist Horizon identify and evidence any issues or concerns.
3	Horizon instructs Gas Sure or future contractor to increase parts in stock to ensure less delays in getting work done, reduce the level of complaints and increase tenant satisfaction.
4	Horizon considers advising tenants to report all boiler related repairs direct to Gas Sure or future contractor to improve repair timescales and satisfaction as well as reduction in call handling.
5	Horizon ensures consistent implementation of a clear and robust system for staff to advise what stages of the repairs process has been done, by whom and further action required, by whom and when. We consider this should be a simple system that staff and managers should be able to access daily to check progress and deal with any issues.
6	Horizon provides training and support for staff to ensure implementation of the repairs reporting and monitoring system (point 5) to ensure it is successful and addresses issues such as officers not following through with the required steps or tasks.
7	Horizon investigates the issues regarding the East / West split regarding types of complaints and puts measures in place to address this.
8	Horizon considers using text or email reminders to tenants for repairs appointments to reduce the number of "no access" calls by operatives.

9	Horizon provides tenant contact details to operatives to allow them to call tenants if they will be late for the appointment, ask to come at an earlier time or cancel.
10	Horizon to consider introducing post repair inspections to assess standard of contractor and operative work and address any issues or concerns.
11	Horizon improves communication systems between Tenant / Horizon / Contractor. This could include, use of the Horizon App, text messaging, email as well as telephone and written information.
12	Where repair reports are received via email, Horizon to ensure that the system is set up to provide a return email that repair has been recorded and detail of when repair is issued and will be carried out.
13	For future new build developments, Horizon to investigate potential to work with an alternative organisation, other than Almond / West Lothian Alliance.
14	In terms of drainage repairs and maintenance, Horizon investigates opportunities to improve this and develop a contract with the company to suit HHA repairs and maintenance timescales.
15	Horizon to review contractor agreements with a view to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving speed of when work is carried out • Increase monitoring of repairs and maintenance contracts • Improving “first time fix” figures and satisfaction levels • Reduce levels of repeat repairs • Assisting Horizon terminate poor performing contractors quickly and effectively
16	Horizon to introduce a new You Said We Did report for tenants to demonstrate how complaints information leads to improved services and how lower satisfaction levels will be or have been addressed and to demonstrate the value of tenant feedback when repairs carried out.
17	Horizon to pilot alternative ways to seek tenant satisfaction levels such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text message questionnaire

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone calls • Survey Monkey (via email)
18	Horizon to continue to seek tenant views via free post card and review this and alternative methods once above pilot completed.
19	Horizon ensures staff update tenant contact details and communication preferences (i.e. telephone call, text message, email, or letter) each time contact is made.



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