

Appendix Two

Nottingham City Homes Tenants' Charter

We are committed to listening to and working with our residents to manage and maintain our homes and estates. We want to deliver ever-improving services by listening to what our residents tell us, acting on their priorities and engaging them in the services we deliver.

To best achieve this we are introducing our new Tenants' Charter, which includes the following commitments:

To be safe in your home

Safety is our top priority. Following the Grenfell fire, we worked with Nottingham City Council and Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service to implement enhanced fire safety measures in all our high rises.

The Government's Social Housing White Paper has prioritised resident safety. New legislation will require the Regulator of Social Housing to carry out inspections and consider safety within its new regulatory role of the consumer standards. Landlords will also have to nominate and make tenants aware of who is responsible for managing health and safety and who has responsibility for making sure that the Consumer Standards are being met. It will require the sharing of information between the Regulator and the Building Safety Regulator and the Housing Ombudsman. New building safety and fire safety legislation that will come into force during the life of this Plan.

NCH is preparing to meet this challenge. Almost 100% of the homes we manage have hard-wired smoke alarms. Where appropriate, properties have carbon monoxide alarms, and we will roll out more as required. Electrical safety regulations are also likely to change; we are already implementing a five-year domestic electrical testing programme.

We will continue to actively involve residents in building safety programmes, and our Board will have full oversight of building safety management, scrutinising the work that we do to make sure of compliance and best practice.

Our commitment is that we will:

- fully comply with the building safety and fire safety legislation outlined in the Social Housing White Paper
- seek to meet obligations in advance of statutory requirements where possible and promote a culture of safety at all times
- produce Building Safety Cases and Resident Engagement Plans for all high-risk buildings, as well as Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for residents who may not be able to evacuate safely without assistance
- engage and influence the Government's electrical safety consultation while achieving 100% compliance with our existing policy
- engage with the domestic smoke and carbon monoxide alarms consultation, completing hard wired smoke alarms in all our homes
- roll out our building safety approach to include multi-occupational buildings under 18 metres on a risk-based basis
- keep all fire risk assessments for multi-occupancy blocks up to date and publicly available including the introduction of intrusive surveys
- maintain 100% gas safety certification
- maintain building safety policies and procedures rigorously

- monitor and report on compliance with fire, gas, water, electric, asbestos and lifts, with periodic external audit
- prioritise any customer contact or complaints which may have a building safety implication.

To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in

Investing in our homes and the property we are responsible for

We know our residents place a high priority on their homes being well-maintained. We plan to deliver a major £112m programme of capital improvements to existing tenants homes, based on tenants' priorities. This will be backed up by improvements in our responsive repairs and maintenance services which support our residents to live in homes they can take pride in.

The homes we manage meet the Nottingham Decent Homes Plus Standard, which is higher than the Government's Decent Homes Standard. Our detailed 30-year Asset Management Strategy¹ gives us the confidence to make sound investment decisions about the homes we are responsible for. Maintaining the Decent Homes Plus Standard is a key objective, and we will deliver it through one of the largest capital investment programmes in the sector.

Having taken on responsibility for retail and other non-residential premises held within the city council's Housing Revenue Account, we will seek to improve the condition and standards of these properties during the life of this Plan. We have made sure Fire Risk Assessments are up to date and will complete Building Safety Cases for these properties. We will complete full stock condition surveys for both the buildings and surrounding facilities such as car parking areas, lighting and open space, agreeing any investment required with the City Council as appropriate. Where premises are unable to remain viable retail premises, we will work with the City Council to consider alternative uses such as the conversion to for use as residential dwellings.

Our commitment is that we will:

- maintain all homes at the Nottingham Decent Homes Plus standard
- over the next three years we will deliver:
 - 3,000 new Grade A energy efficient boilers
 - 1,500 central heating upgrades
 - 1,400 new kitchens
 - 1,600 new bathrooms
 - 4,700 new Secure by Design doors
 - 1,900 sets of windows
 - 900 new roofs
- make sure our tenants have a voice in the Government's review of the national Decent Homes Standard, which is likely to include measures to improve energy efficiency and improved communal and open spaces
- plan for the financial impact of 'Decent Homes 2' and urge the Government to make sure that adequate funding is available to resource such changes
- bring surveying in-house and enhance the way we use technology to plan and deliver our property investment, including using digital techniques and centralising digital information on all our properties. This will help us:
 - eliminate unnecessary pre-works surveys
 - respond to information requests quickly

¹ Nottingham City Council & Nottingham City Homes. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2012-2042. www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents/

- make more informed decisions
 - get repairs right first time
 - manage compliance and building safety management
 - use predictive analytics to help minimise responsive repairs by anticipating issues ahead of problems.
- develop our use of the Internet of Things, using smart technology to support improvements such as self-test boilers and emergency lighting, damp and humidity sensors, and self-regulating heating systems.

Commitment to delivering an excellent repairs service

Our residents have a right to expect a high quality repairs and maintenance service, and we are pleased to have very high levels of customers reporting that they are satisfied with their last repair. NCH carries out over 130,600 responsive repairs a year on average (almost 360 a day), and we have a 24/7 Emergency Repairs Service to respond to situations where there is immediate risk of serious injury or significant harm. We always aim to carry out repairs right first time, completing the repair at the first visit.

We provide a variety of options for reporting repairs, these are by phone, email, online, post or in person, and for many residents, repairs staff are the face of NCH.

Our commitment is that we will:

- always focus on Right First Time in the way we carry out repairs
- enhance the use of our Repair Finder diagnostic tool to support Right First Time objective
- merge planned and responsive repairs services so that we can respond more promptly to guttering, fencing and general repairs
- develop Housing Online so that customers can choose appointment times that are convenient to them
- introduce live tracking, so that customers can report, track and cancel repairs
- improve customer contact, keeping customers informed of progress
- utilise picture and video reporting from within a tenant's home to better support the diagnosis of problems
- develop the potential for repairs staff to help residents by:
 - providing guidance and coaching on repairs tenants are responsible for
 - advising on energy efficiency.
- continue to maintain 100% gas safety & achieve 100% compliance on electrical safety
- skill our workforce to install and maintain alternative energy sourced heating systems as natural gas is phased out.

Commitment to creating safe neighbourhoods

We will deliver our Neighbourhood Management Strategy so that by working in partnership with the Council, the Police and other agencies we will have a positive impact on individuals and communities across Nottingham.

Tackling crime and anti-social behavior (ASB) is a high priority for residents. Crime and ASB undermine the quality of life for individuals, families and communities, and we are committed to taking a victim-centered approach that incorporates advice, victim care and support throughout. By using our customer insight and crime and ASB data, we can identify local issues, feed into neighbourhood plans with partners, and help to deliver preventative interventions. Strengthened engagement with the voluntary sector is a crucial way of engaging with many hard-to-reach groups in the community to get a representative understanding of local crime and ASB concerns, allowing us to work in partnership to address these.

Residents have told us they value tolerant and supportive neighbourhoods where people get along with each other. We will support that with a zero tolerance approach to hate crime.

We also have an important role to play in supporting the victims of domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Bill will place new legal requirements on landlords to work with local councils to provide support, including accommodation, for victims of domestic abuse and their children. We have signed the Chartered Institute of Housing's Domestic Abuse - Make a Stand pledge, demonstrating our commitment to improving accessibility and safety for tenants experiencing domestic abuse.

We are committed to a zero Modern Slavery approach, which includes an expectation that the suppliers of goods and services we use have a similarly robust approach. Our work in neighbourhoods where people live also means that we may have opportunities to detect evidence of modern slavery in its varied forms through the work that we do. In such cases we will work with appropriate partners to tackle the issue.

Our commitment is that we will:

- continue to have a strong working relationship with the Police and Nottingham City Council so that our estates continue to be safe places to live
- continue to take the toughest possible stance against drug offences and serious and violent crime, including knife crime, on our estates
- seek to have meaningful engagement with perpetrators to prevent repeat incidents of ASB and re-offending
- focus on tackling the root causes of crime and ASB, exploring the options to develop and deliver behavioral change through the Tenant Academy
- strengthen partnership working by exploring further opportunities to work with the voluntary sector, the Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation and the Prison Service
- work with partners to tackle hate crime, encourage reporting, and provide an enhanced level of support for those affected
- improve support for tenants experiencing domestic abuse – support will be from trained staff that work in partnership to provide a rounded service
- hold perpetrators to account, using the full spectrum of our powers when needed
- work with partners to protect people from serious harm, exploitation and modern slavery
- Strengthen provision and seek external accreditation to make sure our domestic violence service is of the highest possible standard.

Commitment to updating homes we manage for older people

We manage 68 independent living communities for older people across the city. Our Grander Designs programme aims to modernise and improve the communal areas of independent living schemes to make sure they are older person friendly. Improvements support HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) principles, increase kerb appeal and encourage social interaction and activity amongst our older tenants. The programme is very popular with residents: "It's so lovely – like living in a hotel!" and "Wouldn't be embarrassed to meet royalty here".

Our commitment is that we will:

- complete the Grander Designs programme by autumn 2021, including the communal areas of the three remaining independent living communities yet to receive their Grander Designs makeover.
- implement a rolling programme to maintain the quality of the shared facilities at all the independent living communities that we manage on behalf of older people
- make sure these communal areas are well used and inviting spaces with a varied offer of activities for our residents to participate in.

Commitment to providing warm, energy efficient homes, reducing carbon and tackling fuel poverty

Nottingham has an ambition to become a Carbon Neutral City by 2028. We fully support this ambition, and we are able to make a major contribution.

Housing creates significant carbon emissions. For some years we have been blazing a trail in greener social housing, delivering cavity and external wall insulation, solar panels and sustainable technology to help heat homes using minimal energy.

Fuel poverty is a significant issue for many of our residents. Reducing energy use by providing property improvements that support lower heating use means lower energy bills and more money in residents' pockets. We're committed to tackling fuel poverty so that:

- staying warm and well is affordable for our residents
- no-one has to choose between heating and eating
- fuel bills don't cause other bills, such as rent, to go unpaid
- physical and mental health problems are not caused or made worse by cold homes
- children are warm enough to stay healthy and meet their potential
- homes are less susceptible to damp and mould.

The Government intends homes to be low to zero carbon by 2050. Nottingham would like to get there sooner. We will aim for all the homes we manage to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating above C by 2030. By 2050, they will be expected to have at least an EPC of B, and possibly A. Energy efficiency projects over the life of this Plan will test the most efficient way of achieving these targets, helping us to target investment effectively. Where we can deliver new homes, our ambition is to seek to meet the highest energy efficiency standards that can be achieved within the context of the resources available to us and the scope of the Future Homes Standard.

Our commitment is that we will:

- refresh our EPC survey information
- undertake a full refurbishment of Colwick Woods Court
- work towards ensuring that all the homes we manage can achieve an EPC Band C rating by 2030
- work with the council to establish a route map for the decarbonisation of heating in the homes we manage, to help achieve carbon neutral targets by 2028
- develop our Carbon Neutral Homes Standard through delivery of pilot projects (deep whole house retrofit pilot projects and heat pump pilot)
- support residents to heat their homes affordably, while decarbonising their heating
- develop proposals for a planned approach to phasing out the installation of replacement gas boilers in our existing homes in future years
- continue to test and develop business models and financial options to fund energy works, including grant funding to support retrofit work
- tackle condensation, damp and mould by fitting better extractor fans and tumble dryer vents when properties change tenancy
- continue to distribute hygrometers to help manage humidity in the homes we manage.

Commitment to investing in our neighbourhoods and estates

We work closely with partners, especially Nottingham City Council's Streetscene service, to maintain the streets, footpaths and landscaping on our estates and around our blocks. We believe that

residents should be able to take pride in where they live, and we know that residents value smart and clean estate environments.

During the coronavirus pandemic, it became very clear how important green spaces are, and how much people value them. Many of our estates have green space designed in to provide room for exercise, fresh air, natural sunlight and play space. Green spaces also contribute towards sustainability by supporting wildlife and biodiversity.

Our Five Star estate inspection programme helps us measure the standards we seek to achieve and our volunteer tenants estates inspectors help us measure standards. These standards have been set and agreed with tenants and cover issues like cleanliness, grounds maintenance, neighbourhood character, levels of satisfaction and quality of soft and hard landscaping.

Working with ward Councillors, our Decent Neighbourhoods programme is at the heart of improving the safety, attractiveness and design of estates. Over the next three years, we will foster cohesive, attractive and thriving estates that people can enjoy and take pride in.

We know that the lack of parking is a significant problem for residents in some areas and we will work with Nottingham City Council to identify solutions to improve parking options.

Our management of tenancies will include making sure that tenants are aware of their responsibilities to maintain their gardens, and we will continue to help people maintain their gardens through our Garden Assistance Scheme if they can't do it themselves.

Our commitment is that we will:

- support the council's objective of making every neighbourhood clean and attractive by working with a range of partners, our communities and local Councillors to enhance open spaces on our estates
- work with the city council to complete the mapping of Housing Revenue Account land in order to clarify the management, maintenance and funding responsibilities associated with these spaces
- produce an updated and revised edition of our neighbourhood design guide
- roll out a planned programme of estate improvements, bringing together budgets to co-ordinate works in a cost effective and efficient way, while having a greater impact with the funding available
- support tenants' groups to draw down external funding for community led neighbourhood improvement projects
- complete more of our estate improvement programme in-house
- improve the consistency and quality of our branding and signage in blocks and on estates
- work with our team of tenant Estate Inspectors to achieve our objective of more estates meeting our Five Star standard
- improve how we receive and manage customer enquiries so we can resolve issues as quickly as possible
- promote our garden tool loan scheme and gardening clubs to help people maintain their gardens
- achieve Green Flag status for appropriate open spaces on our estates
- improve the design of communal areas and open spaces, removing redundant features where necessary, so that they better support the health and wellbeing of the local community
- Subject to funding availability, look into offering hard standings and other car parking solutions, and begin to roll out the infrastructure needed to charge electric cars.
- promote and improve viable garage sites to increase revenue while continuing to seek new uses for old sites that are not fit for purpose, removing garages where there is no demand or where they attract anti-social behaviour

- maintain our communal lighting using low energy lighting solutions where appropriate
- work with the council to improve recycling opportunities in blocks of flats
- include natural habitats and biodiversity in improvement schemes, and support residents who want to create Pocket Parks and Community Gardens.

Commitment to identifying and supporting tenants when they most need help

The majority of our tenants are self-sufficient, content to live independently or supported by family and friends. However, we recognise that there are times where we all need a little extra help, and the coronavirus pandemic has made this all the more apparent.

Some of our residents live alone and we are conscious of the impact loneliness can have on peoples welfare. We will work to help support residents have meaningful social relationships, and many of our activities, events and opportunities to get involved help achieve this.

Some people who live in the homes we manage have periods of poor physical or mental health and may need additional support; others may have temporary or longer term support needs for different reasons.

Our commitment is that we will:

- make sure our Housing Patch Managers and Independent Living Co-ordinators get to know new tenants at the earliest opportunity, starting at the sign up process
- improve access to and tenant awareness of how best to contact their Housing Patch Manager
- increase our focus on providing help and support when needed by making sure that we can identify changes in circumstances more readily through a programme of annual tenancy audits and regular tenancy visits
- make it easy for tenants to inform NCH about ongoing changes to their circumstances that may impact on their ability to manage a tenancy
- continue to embed our Eyes Wide Open approach so that we remain alert to residents who might need extra support at different times in their lives, and can encourage others to notify us if they have concerns
- refer to partner organisations best placed to help residents where it is appropriate to do so
- provide training to staff working with people with mental health needs, and make sure that mental health training is part of our staff learning and development programme
- help address social isolation and loneliness, for example through our work to engage and involve residents and forming constructive partnerships with voluntary sector organisations
- deliver adaptations to council housing to meet the specific needs of individual households.

To have a home you can afford

Alongside our ambition to build new homes that Nottingham people can afford, a core activity is the management and maintenance of homes at social and affordable rents. Re-letting these homes provides a supply of affordable homes for people on the waiting list. The work we do to make homes ready for re-letting, and the allocation of these homes via the Nottingham HomeLink Housing Register, is a vital part of making sure of a supply of homes that people can afford. Our work to help people sustain their tenancies and collect the rents tenants pay, is critical in helping people keep a roof over their head, as well as a vital part of making sure our business operates robustly.

We will develop our work in these areas to provide greater customer focus, improved tenant satisfaction and modernised ways of delivering these services.

Our commitment is that we will:

- improve how we work on empty properties between lettings, using a Northgate package to reduce the time homes are empty (void times)
- involve our customers in a review of our lettable standard
- manage budgets, meet our lettable standard and maximise capital works while properties are empty
- improve the data monitoring and reporting systems for void property and lettings management
- use technology to market homes more effectively - showing plans and videos of available properties
- deliver a fully digital tenancy sign up process online, which is more flexible and suited to customer needs, promoting 'Keys to Your Tenancy' so new tenants are well informed before sign-up
- streamline HomeLink applications, maximising applications online
- provide holistic housing options such as the Home Finder Agent role to offer wider advice to those seeking accommodation, supporting mutual exchanges and consider an accessibly located 'property shop'.

We will focus on rent collection and tenancy sustainment, helping to make sure that our approach helps prevent homelessness.

Our commitment is that we will:

- continue to improve 'Keys to Your Tenancy' our pre-tenancy offer, through e-learning and Rent Team assessment to make sure appropriate support is in place for people with increasing vulnerabilities
- maintain our multi-agency approach to providing support with partners like Housing Aid, local advice services, and our own teams that support training and employability skills
- transfer more rental payments to Direct Debit to deliver efficiencies and help prevent arrears
- continue to support tenants at the earliest sign that they may be struggling to pay their rent
- pursue an ethos of tenancy sustainment to help tenants pay back any rent arrears which have accrued, while pursuing a formal process for tenants who chose not to engage with us
- improve collection rates of former tenant arrears
- with Nottingham City Council we will carry out a comprehensive review of service charges to make sure transparency, fairness and accuracy in all recharges made
- introduce well designed account e-statements (or hard copies where needed)
- improve digital access with more communication through Housing Online, providing efficient, automated text and e-mail information and a better ability to interact with customers through web chat, providing a more instant and cost effective way of offering communication advice and support
- maintain our Advice Quality Standard accreditation for the Universal Credit and Tenancy Sustainment Teams
- consider and assess the costs and benefits of establishing our own in-house debt advice service in order to help the residents we serve.

To have your voice heard and to be treated with respect

We're already committed to putting our residents at the heart of everything we do. This golden thread runs through Nottingham City Homes, placing tenants in the driving seat. We have an involvement pool of willing tenants in place and a roadmap of involvement options.

We have reviewed the way we run NCH and have introduced a new ALMO Board, which consists of tenants, and is designed to give tenants a bigger say in how NCH operates. We will review and improve how our ALMO Board works to make sure this is making the improvements our tenants want to see. We're always listening to what residents tell us, whether through our surveys, the focus groups we run, or through consultations - like the one we did to help develop this Corporate Plan.

Our Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Strategy supports engagement at all levels, with residents taking on roles from Street and Block Champions to Tenant Board Members. Residents are also actively involved in scrutinising our services through our Customer Excellence Panel and our ACE Inspector programme.

The work of community volunteers in our neighbourhoods cannot be underestimated. It is through the tireless work of volunteers that communities thrive and become great places to live. This has never been more so apparent than during the coronavirus pandemic, which has really shone a light on the strong sense of community that exists in many of our neighbourhoods and communities.

We will positively promote our neighbourhoods, supporting people who live on our estates and the valuable contributions they make, challenging conventions and negative stereotypes about social housing, addressing the stigma that residents told the government some people associate with social housing. NCH and our residents know that there is much to be proud of, and we are proud to say it.

We also maintain close relationships with organisations like the National Federation of ALMOs (NFA), Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and other national networks to help make sure tenants' voices are heard at national level.

It's crucial that we connect with the different groups of people whose lives we affect in ways that suit them. Timely, appropriate, easy to read and effective marketing and communications are key to making these connections. We strive to make sure that all communications with and to residents, staff and stakeholders supports our reputational and cultural aims, and contributes to the perception of NCH being a good landlord, employer, contractor and partner. We have a range of different communications channels to reach our audiences, and we aim to reach people through their preferred way of receiving information and to provide simple, convenient ways for people to contact us, improving digital functionality so that tenants can move away from making telephone calls when they need to contact us.

Our commitment is that we will:

- implement a company-wide programme of enhanced customer care training, and consideration of Customer Service Excellence accreditation
- improve our processes to keep customers informed about progress of their service requests
- continue to support residents be involved in our governance structure, making it easier to actively participate, increasing the numbers and the diversity of those involved, providing tailored training to assist tenant Board and Customer Excellence Panel (CEP) members to hold us to account
- review our Board structure to make sure it is giving tenants a strong voice in our Governance processes
- promote and celebrate the great work positive impact and changes made through resident involvement helping us shape and design services that best meet the needs of residents
- develop a new Young Community Champion programme in recognition of the positive impact that young people have in their neighbourhoods
- expand on our Young Inspectors programme to make sure that young people's views on the areas that they live in are heard and acted on

- continue to support and inspire residents to get involved in our Tenant and Resident Groups, community groups and as Street and Block Champions, increasing the number of actively involved tenants to make sure all areas have strong representation
- provide funding for community activities through our Make a Difference funding
- continue to support the annual Tenant and Leaseholder Awards and Garden Competition, recognising and thanking residents for their contribution to thriving neighbourhoods and communities
- launch a new, tenant-led charity to support residents and the communities they live in, and recruit tenant trustees for the charity
- equip Street and Block Champions and ACE Inspectors with the HouseMark App to make reporting matters easier and increase the speed of our response
- introduce opportunities for tenants around the city to meet the leaders of Nottingham City Homes in person
- support residents to engage with local and national decision-makers in government so that they can make their voices heard
- make sure tenants' voices are heard in the review being carried out in the Nottingham City Council Recovery and Improvement Plan
- develop a 'return on tenant investment' statement as part of our Tenants' Charter
- publish our residents' newsletter (NCH News) to inform people, and promote ways in which they can speak to us. We will provide this in different formats, as well as using digital and social media to have a dialogue with residents and listen to their views
- use social media to reach more residents and allow them to communicate with us
- challenge stigma about social housing wherever we encounter it, and through the positive promotion of the contributions so many residents make.

To know how we are performing

We have regularly published performance information, but there will be new requirements for all social landlords to report a set of tenant satisfaction measures, to enable scrutiny of the landlord by tenants, and to provide a clear breakdown of how income is being spent.

We are committed to delivering high levels of quality and customer service. To support our day to day activity we have a quality management system which focusses on developing and reviewing the way we operate, with the aim of ensuring that customer requirements are met. This involves a review of all of our processes over a three year period to make sure they are fit for purpose, and to undertake regular checks to confirm we do what we say we will do. We are in the process of determining whether to adopt the Cabinet Office's Customer Service Excellence Standard during the lifetime of this plan.

Our existing performance information covers much of what is required by the White Paper. We will develop this further to add additional clarity to the material we publish, making sure that the Group's subsidiary performance can easily be available. We will continue to use the Housing Quality Network self-assessment and toolkit for complaints review, and roll this out more widely. We respond to Freedom of Information requests as required.

Our commitment is that we will:

- publish what we have delivered, and annually review delivery against the Plan, reporting progress against the delivery of our commitments, and clarifying reasons behind items should they not be on track for delivery
- publish the relevant information in a clear and easy to access way, including all relevant compliance data

- engage with the Regulator of Social Housing's process to develop the required tenant satisfaction measures
- complete our Performance Management Framework review and implement
- review and implement new measures - definitions and data accuracy are key to this
- make sure all reporting differentiates between different parts of the NCH Group - NCH, NCH RP, NCHEL
- review the implications of access to information, particularly new requirements that will apply to NCH RP
- consult with tenants on what financial information is important to them and consider how best to present this information
- be accountable and we will appoint the 'Responsible Persons' roles, required for both NCH and Nottingham City Council's landlord function, roles to make sure compliance with the Consumer Standard, Health and Safety requirements and for fire safety risks in multi occupied buildings.

To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

Our complaints process is an important part of the service we offer to residents.

We want customers to be satisfied with the services we provide and to deliver continuously improving services. So if something is wrong, we want to hear about it so that we can put it right and make sure it doesn't happen again. We use complaints data to improve customer satisfaction, drive service improvement and inform changes in delivering and shaping services. We learn from the complaints we receive to improve the services we provide.

Our Customer Excellence Panel, comprised of tenants, has reviewed the way we handle complaints and made a number of recommendations. We are implementing the changes recommended.

We have completed a self-assessment against the new Complaint Handling Code published by the Housing Ombudsman Service and aim to act quickly and decisively to resolve complaints. Our complaints processes are supported by our Complaints Panel which allows complaints to be considered by other residents as part of our involvement and scrutiny process.

We use customer relationship management (CRM) techniques to provide insight into customers' preferences, supported by regular surveys and feedback processes for residents to let us know their views. We do not operate a one size fits all approach, and customer insight is a vital tool in understanding the diversity of our residents and the services they would like.

Our commitment is that we will:

- deliver on the action plan resulting from the Complaint Handling Code self-assessment
- revise our Complaints Policy and Procedure in line with White Paper recommendations and new regulatory requirements
- empower staff to make sure complaints are resolved at the point of contact as far as possible
- review our reporting of complaints, and the speed and effectiveness of complaints handling.
- involve staff in further training about complaints processes
- make sure that residents know how they can complain if they want to
- engage with the proposed national awareness-raising campaign about resident complaints
- continue to engage with the Housing Ombudsman Service to make use of learning from their work across the sector and adopt best practice.