

STAR Resident Scrutiny Panel: Repairs Review April 2024

Introduction

The STAR Resident Scrutiny Panel has completed a comprehensive review to improve the day-to-day repairs service at STAR Housing Association. This review aimed to align services with both regulatory standards and the expectations of residents, focusing on quality, effective communication, and operational efficiency.

Objectives

Our main objective was to assess the effectiveness of the repairs service and to identify opportunities for enhancement. We aimed to ensure the service adheres to the high standards expected by residents and regulatory frameworks, with a particular focus on enhancing service delivery, communication clarity, and operational efficiency.

Methodology

The review utilised a range of methods to collect data and gain insights:

- Briefings with key service delivery managers.
- Reviews of relevant documents, including policy assessments and comparisons of best practices.
- Analysis of direct feedback from residents through surveys, compliments, and complaints.
- Site visits and call listening sessions to understand nuances in service delivery.
- In-depth interviews with strategic managers for a grounded perspective.

Key Findings

The panel observed that:

- **Service Delivery:** Resident satisfaction is generally high. However, there is room for improvement in the timeliness and consistency of repairs, which could further enhance the service experience.
- **Communication:** Despite generally positive interactions, gaps in communication have been noted that could impact resident trust and satisfaction.
- **Operational Efficiency:** While innovative improvements are underway, ongoing challenges related to staffing and resource allocation continue to affect responsiveness.

Conclusions

The panel concluded that:

- Enhancing diagnostic tools and repair processes could reduce repair times and improve effectiveness.

- Increasing scheduling flexibility would better accommodate resident needs.
- Continued investment in staff training and development would enable more efficient and empathetic resolutions to issues.
- Revising communication strategies could lead to more informed and engaged residents.

Recommendations

To address these insights, the panel recommends:

- **Operational Enhancements:** Standardise diagnostic processes and incorporate advanced tools to enhance repair accuracy and efficiency.
- **Communication Improvements:** Develop and implement a communication approach to standardise updates and notifications about repairs, using clear and inclusive language.
- **Resource Management:** Support the appointment of a procurement resource to streamline operations and ensure contractor performance.
- **Staff and Resident Support:** Enhance training programs and update support systems to better prepare staff to meet and exceed resident needs.
- **Building Standards:** Explore and implement modern, maintainable materials in repairs to enhance the aesthetic and functional standards of properties.

Implementation

The panel suggests these recommendations be supported by a detailed action plan with clear timelines for implementation and ongoing evaluation. This plan should be integrated into STAR's operational policies with oversight from both management and the scrutiny panel to ensure transparency and accountability.