



Tenants' Voice – improving services

Scrutiny review of Annual rent and service charge review

1. Background

Following discussions with tenants at the Tenants' Voice – improving services meeting on 12 September 2024, tenants chose to carry out a review on how tenants are involved in the annual rent and service charge review process.

Tenants made this decision as Progress Housing Group (the Group) are preparing for the rent and service charge review. It is important to get tenants involved in the process and whilst this has always been included in previous years there have been varying degrees of success.

It is hoped that the Tenants' Voice – improving services group can offer recommendations as to how to build on previous successes to involve more tenants in the process.

2. What we chose to look at

To carry out the review tenants focused on;

- What information is provided to tenants
- How information is provided to tenants
- How tenants are involved in the review process

3. Information we looked at

To carry out the review tenants received the following:

- An initial briefing session by Financial Services Director and Finance Business Partner - rents
- Information provided in last year's rent and service charge sessions for independent living, general needs and RWP tenants
- Information provided in the rent and service charge review video
- 3 questions set and shared with tenants and colleagues to gather wider information
- Information available on Progress Housing Groups website
- Links to information available on 3 other housing providers websites:
 - Jigsaw Homes Tameside
 - Magenta Living
 - Irwell Valley Homes

4. What is working well

Through the review, tenants identified the following areas are working well;

- Information on the website is clear and helpful
- Information in the video is clear and easy to understand

5. Our findings and recommendations

During the review tenants identified a number of recommendations they feel will improve the service for tenants. These are detailed below.

Our findings	Our recommendations	Tenant Satisfaction Measure
Referring to the way tenants are involved in the rent and service charge setting process as consultation is misleading.	Brand all involvement sessions as information rather than consultation.	TP07 – Landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter.
Some information provided on previous presentations is difficult to understand.	Make sure all information provided follows the Group’s corporate style. Below are some further suggestions on how to improve the information provided; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain English • No jargon • Clear images • Graphs (bar, pie and column) • Numbers and % • Provide examples • 1 A4 sheet rent on 1 side and service charges on other • Further information on website for those interested • Remove music from video • Include images on website information 	TP07 – Landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter.
Tenants are interested in knowing what their rent and service charges are	Provide information about what is included in the rent and service charges and	TP07 – Landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter.

<p>spent on, and what it will provide.</p>	<p>what this will provide this could include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new homes • Kitchens, bathrooms • Repairs • Pie chart of every penny spent • Include what is not covered i.e. private gardening, TV licence and personal costs • How much is wasted on missed visits, what could this provide • Example of ex social housing property rent as private let 	
<p>The number of tenants and support providers attending the involvement sessions is very small.</p>	<p>Develop an alternative approach to involving tenants. This could include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attending activities in schemes and community centres. • Tenants identified as being interested in being contacted • RWP hub groups • Consultation website page • Provide feedback sheet to provide feedback • Support agencies asking to share with tenants 	<p>TP07 – Landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter.</p>

6. Next steps

We will discuss our findings and recommendations with the service team. The session planned for Tuesday 12 November will enable discussions to support the findings of this report and help the service team to develop an appropriate action plan.



7. Measuring impact

By implementing the recommendations, it is anticipated the following outcomes will be achieved;

- Increase in number of tenants involved in rent and service charge review
- Increased number of views on rent and service charge information on website and social media
- Increase in volume of feedback from tenants to include in report to Group Board
- Reduction in number of queries on rent and service charges increase

8. Support provided for the scrutiny review

Tenants would like to thank all those involved in supporting this review, this includes other tenants and colleagues from Progress who have supported the review by providing information and responses.