



Summary of Resident Panel meeting held on 29th June 2023 at Colebrooke Place

Residents Present: Janice, Helen and Mark

Staff/Board: Nancy Korman (NK) Susan French (SF) Chery Whittlel (CW) Patrick Penny-Annang (PPA)

1.1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

1.2. Apologies were received from Rachel & Chris

Minutes of the last meeting

1.3. The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the previous meeting held on April 20th 2023.

Review and Approval of Repair Timeline/Responsibilities Booklet

1.4. SF updated the panel on the need for a booklet to clarify the responsibilities of both BHA and tenants regarding repairs. BHA has historically taken on repairs that are typically considered tenant responsibilities. The aim of the booklet is to clearly outline how quickly BHA completes repairs, what BHA is responsible for, and what tenants are responsible for.

1.5. NK inquired about the distribution and announcement of the booklet.

1.6. SF replied that once it is designed and printed, every resident will receive a copy. Additionally, it will be published on the website and announced in the newsletter. SF also mentioned that this is linked to BHA's ongoing work on repairs and the development of standards to ensure consistent information is provided to residents.

1.7. Mark suggested including plenty of photos and using simple language in the finished booklet.

1.8. Janice expressed the importance of giving residents enough time to prepare when bathroom/kitchen upgrades are being done.

1.9. SF clarified that this would be different from tenant responsibilities and related to planned works.

1.10. Mark highlighted the need for a clear distinction between planned works and repairs to avoid any misunderstanding.

1.11. CW agreed, adding that there would be a different timeframe for each.

1.12. Janice suggested presenting the booklet to BHA TRA when it is ready and providing a summarised version or bringing sections for feedback.

1.13. CW also proposed a name change for the booklet.

Review and Approval of Building Safety Booklet

1.14. SF updated the panel on BHA's discussions regarding engaging residents on building safety and how to effectively communicate BHA's efforts to keep residents safe in their homes.

1.15. SF discussed the current focus on Damp & Mould in Social Housing and BHA's actions, including the establishment of a Damp & Mould register and the installation of high-powered extractor fans where feasible.

1.16. Mark suggested adding context and background information on upcoming laws in the next newsletter.

1.17. CW emphasised the importance of providing context on "Damp & Mould," especially considering Awaab's law.

1.18. Helen highlighted the need for regular communication with residents, even when there is no progress, to ensure they do not feel forgotten.

- 1.19. SF acknowledged the suggestion and mentioned that BHA has been exploring this area, stating BHA are diligent in getting back to residents. However, if there is nothing to report, communication may be limited.
- 1.20. NF asked about analysing repair appointments and if BHA can learn from them.
- 1.21. SF explained that BHA looks at repairs outstanding for more than 30 days and also examines reports from residents who have not had any repairs within the year, as well as residents who have reported more repairs than the average. This analysis aims to identify areas for improvement and learning.
- 1.22. NF noted the use of "We" in formal documents and recommended using "BHA" instead.

Complaints Policy

- 1.23. SF updated the panel on the Complaints Policy, which is being updated to align with the Housing Ombudsman's good practice guidance. The goal is to streamline and shorten the process for residents making complaints.
- 1.24. CW added that the Housing Ombudsman has updated the complaints code, enabling residents to seek advice directly without going through internal processes first. This will speed up the process for residents.
- 1.25. Helen inquired about BHA's approach to defusing complaints from the start.
- 1.26. SF explained that BHA tries to address issues directly with residents at the initial stage to understand the underlying concerns. CW suggested including lessons learned from complaints in an end-of-year report, as recommended by the Ombudsman.
- 1.27. SF acknowledged the suggestion but mentioned that it can be challenging to generalise and extract lessons learned in some cases.

Death of Tenant Procedure

- 1.28. Janice shared her experience with the "death of tenant" procedure at a social landlord and asked about BHA's procedure in such cases and what happens if someone passes away in a property.
- 1.29. CW explained that when a tenant dies in a property, BHA contacts public trustees, social care, and the police for access and appropriate actions.
- 1.30. Janice suggested allowing tenants to provide discreet information to BHA, as it would provide residents with a sense of security knowing that BHA has this information.
- 1.31. CW clarified that BHA can take solicitors' details but cannot handle personal information/documentation. The current procedure also considers residents who have not planned for their passing.
- 1.32. Mark emphasised the need for clear processes, and asked how BHA updates resident details such as "Next of Kin."
- 1.33. Patrick added that BHA will be starting a project to update contact details, which will include information on "Next of Kin" or emergency contacts.**

Downsizing Incentive Scheme

- 1.34. CW presented some ideas on how to encourage residents to downsize, incorporating feedback from the previous panel meeting. It was expressed that financial incentives are not the only motivating factor; the support provided by BHA in the moving process is equally important. CW presented examples of support packages that could be offered, including assistance with removals.

1.35. Cheryl emphasised the importance of residents understanding why downsizing is necessary and suggested providing additional context on how it benefits others.

1.36. Mark commented that while financial incentives do help, the emotional aspect of moving is a significant factor. He suggested that BHA should highlight the positive outcomes of downsizing and consider sharing a resident's story in the newsletter.

1.37. Helen added that it is important to ensure residents feel comfortable with their new living arrangements before downsizing.

Other Matters

Increase Rent of Garages and Sheds

1.38. Janice inquired about the recent increase in the price of garages and sheds.

1.39. SF responded that the rent for garages and sheds has not been increased for many years. However, BHA plans to increase it in the following year to align with Islington council rent charges for garages.

Morland Mews Parking Changes

1.40. Janice raised concerns about the parking changes at Morland Mews.

1.41. Patrick acknowledged that there is a concern with some residents, particularly households with multiple cars and residents living in townhouses.

1.42. Mark expressed his understanding of the need for enforcement but felt that BHA may have rushed the implementation without proper consideration.

1.43. Cheryl mentioned that since joining, she would like to gain a clear understanding and ensure everything is in order before moving forward.

The next resident panel meeting will be held in September.

Minutes are published on BHA's website:
<https://barnsbury.org/get-involved/resident-panel/>

For information on the panel please contact Patrick Penny-Annang (patrick@barnsbury.org)