



Caretaking Service Standard

Report

September 2012

Introduction

The role of the Housing Regulation Panel is to monitor the standards of Housing Services to ensure they are quality services which give value for money. It monitored the Caretaking Service Standard during the period March 2012 to July 2012, evaluated the results and made recommendations for improvement. The caretaking service standard is described in the CCC set of leaflets "Caretaking Service Agreement" for

- Hanover and Princess Courts (including Russell Court)
- Anstey Way
- East Road (5 locations)
- Kingsway
- Arbury Court, Cockerell Road, Rutland Close, Fordwich Close
- Bermuda Terrace, Gilbert Close & Borrowdale, Frances Darwin Court, Perse Way, Aylesburgh Close
- Hazelwood Close, Molewood Close, Carlton Terrace, Brackley Close

Monitoring

The Housing Regulation Panel met with the Area Housing Managers and the Estate Champion for a Caretaking Service briefing and update on 13 March 2012 prior to commencing its monitoring of the service.

Information was collected from the following sources:

- City Homes, including site visits and follow-up meetings with officers when requested by HRP
- The Customer Service Centre
- The Business Development Officer
- Minutes of the City Homes Residents' Partnership and the Leaseholders' Consultation
- Housing Regulation Panel site inspections:
These were carried out by HRP members working in pairs. The locations for inspections were selected where possible for the day following the scheduled delivery of the service.

The caretaking service is delivered at 24 locations across the city. Hanover and Princess Courts, Anstey Way, East Road and Kingsway have "on site" caretakers. The other areas receive a mobile caretaking service. HRP inspected the caretaking service standard at 18 (75%) of the 24 locations.

Evaluation

- The leaflets describing the Caretaking Service Agreement are only available on request from the City Homes Area Offices.
- No specific performance information (benchmarking, complaints information etc.) is kept for the service apart from the cost of staff.
- The delivery of the service is inconsistent, partly due to the difference in the agreements for the delivery of the mobile service and the "on

site” service. The inconsistency is also partly due to obstructions left by residents in walkways, stairwells etc. which prevent the caretakers delivering the service in full.

- Across the city there appears to be a problem with broken doors and blockages in rubbish chutes.
- In many of the locations there are no “No Smoking” signs or Fire Notices. There are no notices giving information about the caretaking service.
- Some of the badly stained stairs, stairwells and walkways would benefit from steam cleaning.
- Kingsway Community Room needs a deep clean.
- The welfare facilities, equipment, storage facilities and work wear for the caretakers are appropriate, but more storage facilities for equipment would be beneficial. The caretakers in the south of the city are not issued with ID badges.
- At recent meetings, the residents of Hanover and Princess Courts have been very complimentary about the improved standard of the caretaking service, which they really appreciate.
- The main strength of the service is that the caretakers are in touch with the residents on site. They are the “face” of City Homes.
- The main weakness of the service is the level of contact and communication with City Homes.
- Overall the caretaking service, when delivered in full, provides good value for money.

Recommendations for improvement

- The Caretaking Service Agreements should be made more widely available to tenants and leaseholders. This could be achieved by including them on the Council’s web site, and putting them in leaflet stands at the Customer Service Centre Reception and Area Office Receptions. They should be included in the new tenants’ pack if the property receives a caretaking service. This would help to give a higher profile to the caretakers as part of City Homes.
- A system for keeping caretaking service performance information needs to be developed.
- The Caretaking Service Agreement for Molewood Close should include sweeping the front door areas and the service charge to residents should be amended to take account of this.
- The procedure for caretakers to report issues (obstructions and damage) which prevent them from carrying out their duties in full should be used much more robustly and monitored.
- Broken doors of rubbish chutes must be replaced and chute blockages cleared.
- Deep clean of Kingsway Community Room.
- Replacement is needed of “No Smoking” signs and Fire Notices where they are not displayed. (HRP is aware that Estates and Facilities are in the process of producing new fire safety notices).
- Caretakers in the south of the city should be issued with ID badges.
- The problems caused by “street life” people (urinating, drinking alcohol etc.) and leaving the evidence behind in some of the communal areas

of East Road and Bermuda Terrace flat blocks, affects the caretaking service and needs to be addressed by City Homes in liaison with other agencies.

Recommendations for improvement when funding is available

- A steam cleaning programme for identified stairs, stairwells and walkways.
- Pressure washer for the caretaking at Hanover and Princess Courts.
- Notices giving the details of the caretaking service and the name of the caretaker with contact details.

The Housing Regulation Panel would like to thank City Homes Officers: Sandra Farmer, Andrew Latchem, Will Beavitt and Nacer Dali for their support with this inspection..

Housing Regulation Panel

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