



Summary report

Review period March 2017 – June 2017



Meet the panel inside

Handy person service review

Welcome to our fifth review. The role of the Scrutiny Panel is to explore, examine and test Phoenix services on behalf of other residents. We also make recommendations to improve services if they are not meeting the standards. For this report, we chose to review the handy person service to investigate the service offer to residents.

“The role of the Scrutiny Panel is to explore, examine and test Phoenix services...”

The handy person service offers free help to residents over the age of 60 or who have a disability with minor repairs or small jobs around the home. The service operates on Mondays and Tuesdays and an operative from the Phoenix Repairs Service carries out the work.

How we carried out the review

Our review began in March. We requested key documents and carried out an initial desktop review looking at the handy person scheme criteria and information about the service including leaflets and complaints. We also compared our service with schemes in other housing associations.

As part of the investigation, we interviewed the repairs manager and frontline staff involved in the scheme to see how jobs are carried out. We then considered how the scheme could be expanded to residents who do not meet the criteria by introducing a charge for minor repairs or small jobs.

The scope for the handy person review was to investigate:

- the accessibility of the service to residents
- the criteria of the handy person scheme
- how the promotion of the scheme could be improved to increase take up
- explore options for expanding the scheme for charges based on the type of job requested
- resident satisfaction with the scheme.





The handy person scheme does not have a policy that sets out guidelines for the scheme.

We found that the scheme is advertised on our website and was promoted in the February 2017 edition of Community News. We were also able to see evidence that promotional flyers have been used to highlight the service and had been posted on notice boards in blocks.

Only Phoenix tenants over the age of 60 or have a disability can access the scheme.

60+



234 jobs have been carried out since 2015. 80% of these were to fit/remove curtains, curtain poles, shower rails and toilet seats. 9% were to assemble flat packed furniture.

When interviewing the...



Partnership Manager
we noted:

- on average, handy person minor repairs and odd jobs are normally completed the week after the request is made
- repair planners have the skills to assess how long a minor repair will take to complete when booking appointments. If they are unsure they ask supervisors for advice and support
- the scheme needs to be publicised more and information provided to tenants.



Handy person operative
we noted:

- multi-skilled operatives are used for the scheme. When the main handy person operative is not carrying out handy person repairs he is completing routine repairs and is a bricklayer by trade
- on occasion, repairs have not been completed in one appointment
- when the correct tools are not available the job may be completed on a different day
- where an operative is required to move heavy furniture, two operatives are always used.

Residents satisfaction!



No complaints had been made about the scheme, however, we noted that complaints are categorised under general repairs so cannot be monitored efficiently or accurately.

Telephone satisfaction surveys are carried out (10% of all repairs) by an external company.

In 2016-17, 91 handy person jobs were completed and 8 residents contacted. The tenants contacted were satisfied with the service they received.

For 2017-18, plans are in place to have a specific category for the handy person scheme to accurately monitor complaints about the service.

5 Our top five

At the end of our review in June we made 5 recommendations, these are:

- 1 To ensure the handy person scheme is publicised to all tenants to increase take up.**
- 2 To consider expanding the service to allow tenants who do not meet the current criteria to pay for the service using a list of set charges for specific jobs.**
- 3 Consider purchasing a special set of tools for the handy person to access so that the work is carried out in one appointment.**
- 4 To review the scheme annually to determine the demand and limitations.**
- 5 Monitor resident satisfaction specifically for the handy person scheme to ensure the quality and impact of the service is clearly visible and monitored.**

Constraints

We noted that the Internal Decorations Policy is scheduled for review but we did not review the Internal Decorations Scheme as part of our investigation.



What we've learnt

We noted that potential outcomes of expanding the scheme would give us the opportunity for the handy person to gain access to homes providing 'early warning' of any other problems within the property. This could also provide quality assurance for the work carried out, which could reduce the costs involved in re-letting our empty properties (voids) in the future.



Meet the panel

The panel was formed in 2014 and is made up of five members.



Eileen Davies



Deirdre Kennedy



Sandra Stephenson



Simon Barlow



Karen Stokes

Join us

There are still vacancies for Phoenix tenants and leaseholders to join us. If you'd like to help put Phoenix under the microscope and improve services and satisfaction, please get in touch!

Traffic light monitoring

0

14

25

0 not started

To make sure that services are improved for all residents, we monitor recommendations from our previous reviews to track when actions have been completed.

We use a traffic light system to help us:

- red (delayed)
- amber (in progress)
- green (completed)

What's next



The Panel will be reviewing Corporate Priorities and Projects before setting their review programme for 2017-18.

Other activities

The Panel has recruited two new members. We're pleased to welcome Simon Barlow and Deirdre Kennedy as official members!



In April 2017, the Panel received accredited training from TPAS on Developing Scrutiny covering:

April 2017

- Models and approaches to resident scrutiny.
- Assessing the best way to get buy in from tenants, staff and governance.
- Quality Assured Scrutiny Standards and how Phoenix measures up.
- Effective planning and well planned scrutiny projects with clear outcomes.
- Training and ongoing support.
- Panel recruitment and retention.
- Empowerment and tenant led scrutiny.

4 members are also working towards a Level 2 Open Award accredited certificate in Understanding Tenant Scrutiny.



More info

This is a summary version of our full report. If you'd like to read the full report, please call 0800 0285 700 or visit the Phoenix website.

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