

# thirteen

## Managing and building homes

### Regulating Consumer Standards 2019

#### Introduction

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has set consumer standards which all registered providers (housing associations and housing organisations) must comply with. This is our 'self-assessment' of how we meet these standards.

We are required to present this self-assessment to Board and also publish on the website, so all customers can see it.

There are four consumer standards:

- 1. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment.**
- 2. Home.**
- 3. Tenancy.**
- 4. Neighbourhood and Community.**

This report gives details of our customer reality checks against the Tenancy Standard. This sets out standards for how we let our properties and manage tenancies, including support for tenants to maintain their tenancy and tackling tenancy fraud. In total 16 checks were carried out to test this standard by 10 involved customers. It took around 8 weeks to complete with a total of 12.5 hours of involvement from the customers.

#### Customer Findings

Involved customers mystery shopped this standard in a range of ways to give assurance.  
**(See Tenancy Standard Assurance Checklist)**

- The customers were happy that the website gave information on the lettings process, the different ways to apply for housing, how the priority banding works and the appeals process if needed.
- The customers were satisfied with the website information on the how to apply for a mutual exchange, how much information needs to be included on the application and support offered to apply. They thought the information was easy to find and understand. Two reception visits to mystery shop the process for mutual exchange gave different outcomes. Some wrong information was given to the customer which has identified some training for the staff, the other visit was successful and the involved customer was happy with the response received.
- Telephone calls were made to test what support is offered to those who are unable to complete an online application to apply for a property the necessary guidance was provided and appointments of support were offered.

- Checks were carried out in Thirteen offices to see what information was displayed on support services to help maintain tenancies. The information given by a member of staff was very informative, however there was no leaflets the customer could take away to read.
- Involved customers job shadowed a voids officer when carrying out their empty property inspections and were happy to give compliance against the standards.
- Meetings took place with Neighbourhood Coordinators and the Homeless team to discuss how their roles ensure they meet appropriate points within the Tenancy Standard. Customers were happy with the information given from all officers and it gave assurance against the standard.
- Customer journey maps were carried out with 3 customers, 2 of these were decants and one was a new tenant after being homeless. These were detailed conversations which mapped out the customers full experience confirming the type of tenures they were given, support offered and homelessness duties.
- The Consumer Standards Assurance group read through the Tenancy Policy and identified assurance with 10 standards.

## **Recommendations**

Whilst carrying out this piece of work some areas for improvement were identified.

- Refresher training to frontline staff on Mutual Exchange; how it works, who can apply and the support that will be offered.
- More readable material to be made available within the offices for customers to take away on the range of support services we have available.

## **Conclusion**

An excel document has been produced to show the companies current position on each standard.

This report and supporting evidence, shows that through our self-assessment, we have rated this standard as being met.