

Minutes

Homes 4 Us
Monday 14th December 2pm – 4pm
Tenant Resource Centre, Hounds Gate



PRESENT:

Clive Thorpe C.T. (Chair), Jenny Grant J.G (Vice Chair), Elaine Graham E.G., Alison Thorpe A.T., Jean Wilson J.W., Christopher England C.E., Valerie Schneider V.S., Ruth Haywood R.H., Loveleen Labana L.L., Lynn Mitchell L.M., Linda Kerry L.K.,

Officers: Sue O'Connor S.OC, Simon Temporal S.T.

Apologies: Sue Stevenson S.S, Alan Darby A.D,

		ACTION
<u>1.0</u>	<u>Welcome & Apologies</u>	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for introductions.	
<u>2.0</u>	<u>Minutes of the Meeting</u>	
	The minutes of 9 th November 2009 were agreed as a true record	All to note
<u>3.0</u>	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
	There were no matters arising from the minutes.	All to note
<u>4.0</u>	<u>Simon Temporal –Improving information on the Leaseholder service for the Disabled</u>	
	ST introduced himself as the Leaseholder Officer for Nottingham City Homes and explained that the purpose of his attendance was to explain about Leaseholders and what their priorities are. One problem is that information held on Leaseholders is lacking and asked for ideas as to how they can encourage the completion of profiling information so that people who may need extra help due to disabilities are not overlooked. ST went on to explain that the Leaseholder team has been in place since 2007 and was formed at the request of the Leaseholders themselves. Most of the properties owned by Leaseholders are Flats, Maisonettes or Bedsits, but they can also be houses. Although they own the property they live in the lease is owned by a landlord so all owners have to pay service charges for the up keep of the building their property is in. ST went onto explain that this is one of the major barriers to collecting information as if a leaseholder receives a letter from NCH they immediately assume it will be asking them to contribute to some major repair that is needed on the building. Also the Lease is one of the strongest documents in British Law and in the terms of the lease there is a restriction on contact from the landlord. This has caused a lack of profiling information which the Leaseholder team feel prevents them from knowing if they are delivering the correct service to their customers.	All to note

- There are approximately 1,040 Leaseholders
- 6% of these have a declared disability
- This is compared to 9% of Tenants
- In the 2001 census 20.1% of people in Nottingham declared that they had a disability

All to note

ST also stated that as well as the barriers that appear to exist to collecting profiling information the level of participation among Leaseholders is also low.
JW – People get a lot of junk mail and if they receive a questionnaire and have a disability then they could be restricted in getting the response to the mail box.

LL – Some people also cannot write very well.

LK – They will also not be able to get their carers to do the paperwork.

JW – NCH should have a disability helpline which people will feel able to ring.

JG – That would be a good idea as long as calls are logged and registered.

ST stated that it was felt that frontline staff need more training in assisting people with disabilities and registering what their disabilities are.

VS – Suggested that those blocks that have community rooms could use them to hold leaseholder surgeries.

ST agreed that taking the service out was something they could consider, as part of the role of the Leasehold officer is to explain charges to people and ensure that they are charged fairly. They already do give an invitation to proactive training when a tenant applies under right to buy so that they are made aware of the potential costs.

CT – Have the Leaseholder Forum had input in how they are given information?

ST -This will be raised as an agenda item in January 2010.

AT – There is a problem as we have no Leaseholders on the Homes 4 Us Forum where they could get more information.

JW - Can multiple ownership of flats be stopped as the condition of the property is not known when they are let, and also gas safety is not an NCH responsibility.

ST This is a headache as it is the responsibility of the owner to get the gas safety check and obtain the Gas Safety Certificate. They have tried to encourage the use of NCH contractors and they are trying to get a change in the lease so that a Gas Safety Certificate may be demanded every year. At present once the property has been bought if it is then rented out NCH have no control over the landlord.

LL – What is the difference between paying rent and Leasehold charges?

ST – Rent is based on a pooling system, rent being the cost of 1% of the total of properties. A Leaseholder is only charged against the number of properties in the block i.e. if there are 4 properties in a block and the total charge is £400 then each property will be charged £100.

CT thanked Simon Temporal for his presentation.

All to note

5.0

Skills Analysis

SOC asked the group if they would be involved in a skills analysis in the new year so they could be involved in areas that they are interested and feel comfortable with when promoting Homes 4 Us. CT added that this would not only look at people's needs but also what they can do.

6.0

Forward Plan

Copies of a forward plan for Homes 4 Us were handed out and discussed it was suggested that leaflets and information should be put in Dr's Surgeries. The

issue of profiling of tenants and leaseholders was raised as contractors working on Decent Homes already have some of this information but it does not appear to have been passed on to NCH.

JG - pointed out that leaflets need to be made available in different languages. VS there is a list of languages on the main leaflets but also literacy problems need to be addressed also.

CE – asked if in the forward plan Homes 4 Us can address Mental Health issues again.

7.0

Any Other Business

JG provided information on Medi Alert Jewellery.

Date and Time of the next Meeting

Monday 11th January 2010

5.00 to 7.00 p.m.

Tenant and Leaseholder Resource Centre

14 Hounds Gate