

Minutes



Homes 4 Us

Monday 12th April 2010

12pm – 2pm

Tenant Resource Centre, Hounds Gate

PRESENT:

Clive Thorpe (Chair)	C.T,
Jenny Grant (Vice Chair)	J.G,
Alison Thorpe	A.T,
Linda Kerry	L.K,
Sue Stevenson	S.S,
Christopher England	C.E,
Ruth Haywood	R.H,
Lynn Mitchell	L.M,
Ade Aderogba	A.A,
Elaine Graham	E.G,
Loveleen Labana	L.L.
Donald Wood	D.W

Officers: Cheryll Rawling Involvement Officer, Julia Burkin Involvement Officer

Apologies: Val Schneider, Margaret Pudsley.

	ACTION
<u>1.0 Welcome & Apologies</u>	
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were received as detailed above.	
<u>2.0 Minutes of the last Meeting</u>	
The minutes of 8 th March 2010 were agreed as a true record	

3.0 Matters Arising

None

4.0 Presentation by Esther Snook OSCAR

Please take a look at the presentation attached which was delivered to the group by Esther Snook and her colleagues.

The group posed a number of searching questions to Esther about the causes of Sickle Cell Anaemia.

The general feeling was that the group felt the illness should warrant being classified as a disability due to the long term debilitating nature of the symptoms sufferers' experience.

Ade reminded the group that NCH are trying to establish a profile of all tenants including those with disabilities or illnesses that can be affected by the conditions they live in, especially relevant during improvement works. As the condition requires a high constant heat tenants with this can experience fuel poverty and require well insulated homes free from damp and draughts. Ade stated for the minutes that he would raise this issue at the next board meeting. Ade also provided a short history of Sickle Cell Anaemia and its links to Malaria.

The question of disability living allowance was raised and after some discussion it became apparent that this condition falls out of the remit of DLA and sufferers will be rejected as a matter of course. It was suggested that anyone that this happens to seeks support from OSCAR and also appeals against the decision. OSCAR believes it is important to provide detailed case history when submitting claims and also general information on the condition.

Clive stated the group would support OSCAR and raise the question of DLA entitlement in a written format with the relevant authorities. The group totally supported this idea.

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5.0 Lynne Hollingsworth – Bullock Construction

Lynne was invited to the meeting to explain her plans for a booklet for constructor staff to cover the specialist needs of tenants with visual and hearing impairments. The idea is to research the best advice for their liaison and construction teams in relation to these conditions which are particularly relevant when the decent homes work is being carried out.

The group was asked to provide any insights as to their ideas for this booklet from an end user perspective. Lynne will be researching with the RNID and RNIB.

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Lynne has sent us a copy of the tenant profile they complete before work starts. This information would add important value to our own customer profiling and should be made available at the end of each phase of work. This information will need to be added to our systems

LH

Lynne explained that by learning more about the needs of people with disabilities they hope to be able to signpost any tenants to local groups and organisations for support during the decent homes improvements and more long term.

There was a feeling that all steps made to improve services and facilities for disabled tenants was welcomed and the group supported this idea and would co-operate however they could. Please pass any suggestions to Cheryll who will collate them and pass to Lynne.

There were a few specific issues raised and these were:

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- Location of Fuse boxes in homes where the tenant is disabled – what sort of needs based assessment do

the construction partners have in place for ensuring the tenant can access the fuse box.

- Tenants who are wheelchair users are entitled to a single ramp to the main door – however properties have two doors and the second is un ramped, causing access issues to rear gardens and suitable fire escapes.
- Arrangements for liaison with carers of tenants with disabilities – how do contractors ensure the carer is fully aware of the work planned and access / restriction of facilities etc also what specific arrangements are in place to accommodate child carers [children who provide care for a parent]
- Gas, water and electric suppliers could also be contacted to look at how they work within the homes of disabled tenants – perhaps invite them to share their standards / customer care policies
- Baths – are they all standard and could there be choices for disabled tenants without an OT assessment. Showers are cheaper to run and easier to access, however NCH have agreed to replace like for like unless there is an OT assessment in place. These assessments can take a long time to come through and in the meantime do disabled tenants get an unfair deal? Being made to wait until the end of a phase of work or having to have part works completed then another visit to complete works after an OT assessment.

In the next meeting there will be an update on these issues and a summary of your suggestions put forward to Cheryll.

6.0 Equality and Diversity Officer – deferred to next meeting

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7.0 Equality and Human Rights Act for Disabilities

Cheryll, Clive and Alison have recently attended an information session on the latest legislation concerning

people with disabilities. The group were provided with a detailed booklet outlining the main principles. There is also a copy in the Tenant Resource Centre if anyone would like to see a copy.

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8.0 Homes 4 Us Annual Conference

The date chosen for this year's conference is Saturday 11th September 2010. This will fall into Involvement Month.

The conference last year was pulled at the last minute and this caused lots of disappointment and confusion. The group felt this was not acceptable and it would avoid any similar situation through a more planned and strategic approach.

The whole group volunteered to help organise the conference and the first meeting will be on 10th May 2010 at 12noon through until 2pm

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It was suggested that a high profile speaker is invited to attend the conference. Ade felt this should be the newly elected minister with responsibility for disabilities.

9.0 Fire Safety Advice

This group has been asked to take a lead on looking at the fire safety issues concerning NCH tenants. See information sheet circulated at the meeting. There will be a special meeting held between 2pm and 4pm on 23 April 2010 at the Tenant Resource Centre, where the Fire Service will be in attendance to offer their support and advice.

ALL

10.0 Thankyou's

Cheryll wanted to say thank you to Sue, Ruth Jenny and Maria for presenting information to the Decent Homes

Customer Care Group and to Sue and Ruth for the presentation they made to the Secure, Warm and Modern staff at Beechdale Court. The presentation went down really well and dates are being booked with Area Panels and Local Housing Office meetings – so anyone wanting to volunteer to give the presentation at their local Housing Office or Area Panel are welcome to get involved.

The group gave Cheryll a round of applause and said thank you for all the work she put into the Sport Relief event, the group had a great time and it is hoped around £360 has been raised.

11.0 Date and Time of Next Meetings

23 April **Special Fire Safety Meeting** 2pm to 4pm

10 May **Annual General Meeting** 11.30am to 12 noon

10 May **Conference Planning Meeting** 12 noon to 2pm

Clive thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting