



GGHT Scrutiny Panel 15 June 2011 Committee Room 3, Town Hall

Minutes

Attendance:	Ray Powell, Doreen Moors, Jean Stringer, Dot Thacker, Jean Bullock, Pete Thacker, Mick Rivington, Sheila Gatehouse, Lynda Johnson Alison Foy, Fiona Graham, Mark Burrows (part), Cam Kinsella (part)
1. Apologies:	

		Action
2.	<p>Equality and Diversity Training (E&D) - Cam Kinsella</p> <p>CK introduced herself and outlined the aim of the session. It is important as a scrutiny panel that members considered the issues of equality and diversity.</p> <p>The panel were asked to consider the meaning of “diversity” and “equality”.</p> <p>The panel completed an exercise on “put yourself in someone else’s shoes” where scenarios were read out and members were asked to describe how they felt in the situation.</p> <p>CK outlined the protected characteristics in relation to equality and diversity.</p> <p>Questions/comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Do we get requests for translated documents? <i>Yes</i> ❖ Do we know how many staff speak other languages? <i>Not at present, CK to investigate.</i> ❖ Is there audio on the internet? <i>Yes</i> ❖ Can the panel have a copy of the presentation? <i>Yes, handouts will be forwarded.</i> <p>The panel thanked CK for her presentation.</p>	<p>CK</p> <p>AF</p>

<p>1.</p>	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting 13 April 2011</p> <p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>❖ Venue: AF advised that the venue on the minutes was incorrect.</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting by RP and seconded by JS.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Gas Safety – Mark Burrows</p> <p>MB outlined the main aspects of the report and the issues identified in the Penningtons report that the panel received in April.</p> <p>As advised at the previous meeting the action plan from the gas servicing review was provided.</p> <p>MB provided the panel with a copy of the suite of letters that tenants receive advising them that their gas safety check is due. The time lapse between each letter depends on what response GGHT have to the letters sent.</p> <p>DM asked whether a satisfaction survey on the gas testing should be included on the letters that tenants receive? MB advised that letters should have had but this will now change. GGD, the contact centre will be contacting customers to ask about their satisfaction.</p> <p>DM questioned the wording on the satisfaction survey that was completed via a hand held device as it stated that she was satisfied with the service that was carried out. DM is not gas trained and therefore is unable to state whether the test/service was conducted to her satisfaction.</p> <p>MB advised that this issue has been picked up by the Board and that the wording on the survey has been changed to state that the tenants certify that someone has attended the property to test the gas.</p> <p>MB advised the panel that Morgan Lambert will be conducting a third party audit of the gas testing work that has been undertaken. This is to ensure that the gas testing has been conducted to a satisfactory and safe standard. They will test a 5% sample and will ultimately carry out another gas test as part of the audit.</p> <p>DM asked whether smoke detectors should be tested as part of the service? MB advised that the smoke detectors should be tested.</p> <p>DM advised that as part of her test they electricity was not turned off to check the battery back up of the detector and a smoke test wasn't done.</p>	

<p>MB stated that it should be and advised that if this wasn't done tenants should report this to us so that we can ensure tests are carried out as part of the contract. MB to follow up with contractors.</p>	MB
<p>LJ asked how new tenants know what should be completed as part of a gas safety test? MB advised that a document is currently being drafted to show tenants what should be done.</p>	MB
<p>DM asked how a broken gas fire may affect the heating if the gas has to be turned off?</p>	
<p>PT commented that there should be a block valve. MB to check.</p>	MB
<p>MB advised that the gas industry has 3 categories, 1 – at risk, 2 – not to current standard, 3 – immediately dangerous. If an engineer who is conducting a gas safety test identifies something as “at risk” the gas will be turned off, this could mean that the property has no heat but the tenant and those surrounding will be safe. GGHT would then be made aware of this to follow up.</p>	
<p>The panel asked how many properties had a gas safety test that was overdue? MB advised that there were 22 properties and that these were in various stages. The panel agreed that performance on gas safety was excellent and that this figure was re-assuring.</p>	
<p>The panel thought that the appointment letters for the annual gas check should state am/pm. MB advised that the contractors manage their workload and requesting this amendments would require a change in the contract.</p>	
<p>MB advised that the CCP and Board have approved that the gas servicing programme is moved to a 10 month rolling programme which should help GGHT to ensure that all properties have a gas safety test within 12 months. Letters will go out 6 weeks prior to when the last service was completed not 6 weeks before the appointment. This give GGHT a longer lead in time to gain access to the property within the 12 months period.</p>	
<p>DM asked if contractors still cold call and if they do, do they put a card through? MB confirmed that contractors do still cold call if they are in the area but a card is not pushed through if they have received the 1st letter.</p>	
<p>MB advised that he would like GGHT to send the letters to tenants.</p>	
<p>LJ asked about accessibility and who monitors if the contractors are sending the letters in the required format? MB advised that if we are aware of the requirements the contractors should be sending them. MB to check that the contractors have this information and are using it.</p>	MB
<p>The sequence of the letters was discussed and MB advised that when a tenant receives the 4th for persistent no access, they will have had the letters and 3</p>	

	<p>visits from the contractors. At this point all non urgent repairs will stop, if a tenant then rings up for a repair the operative will go out with a gas engineer who will conduct the test.</p> <p>DT questioned whether the urgent letter which is sent from the solicitor could be in red, like a final reminder bill? MB to consider.</p> <p>A Notice to Quit (NTQ) will be served if there is no rent being received, no contact or request for repairs from the tenant. This is usually 6 weeks after no contact and GGHT assume that the property is abandoned.</p> <p>The housing officers, MB, support providers meet prior to NTQ's being served to highlight if there are any issues that GGHT should be aware of, discuss any vulnerabilities and decide what action to take. .</p> <p>JS asked if vulnerable people were treated in the same way? MB advised that if we're aware of vulnerabilities we work with other agencies. If we're not aware then the action discussed is followed. For vulnerable people who we are aware of who have not allowed access we use the solicitor rather than serve a NTQ.</p> <p>PT asked how many NTQ's have been served? MB to confirm.</p> <p>DM asked whether there were any outstanding checks that were older than 2010? MB confirmed that there wasn't. March 2011 was the oldest gas test.</p> <p>MB advised that the contractors get access first time to possibly 60% of the properties which is comparable to national performance.</p> <p>DM do we still check properties with solid fuel? MB confirmed that we did.</p> <p>JS asked who is responsible for sweeping the chimneys, MB confirmed that it is GGHT's responsibility.</p> <p>MB advised the panel that when a property becomes void, gas fires are being taken out as there is a greater risk with a gas fire due to the open flue. Gas fires are being replaced with electric fires as this also provides an additional source of heat if the gas was off.</p> <p>The panel thanked MB for the report and were pleased with the performance of gas testing and safety.</p>	<p>MB</p> <p>MB</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Training Courses</p> <p>AF advised that she was still looking into training courses and that one had become available at Trafford Hall but not all members could be accommodated.</p> <p>The panel were asked what they would like covered on the tenancy training</p>	

	<p>that would be scheduled for September? It was agreed that an overview of what GGHT could/couldn't do.</p> <p>The panel requested that training was not delivered as part of the meetings in future.</p>	
4.	<p>Any other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ AF distributed a copy of the forward plan that had been agreed so that the panel were aware of what would be on future agenda's. AF also asked the panel to approve that they scrutinize the offer document promises, outturn performance and signing off the annual report as these are key areas of the business. The panel approved the plan ❖ Champions – the panel were asked to consider appointing champions to mirror those of the Board i.e. E & D, Value for money, Health and Safety, Closing the gap. The panel discussed the role and decided against appointing champions 	
6.	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday 13 July 10am – 1pm (lunch at 1pm) Warrington Disability Partnership</p>	