



**MINUTES OF THE LONDON RESIDENT PANEL MEETING
HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2020
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA TEAMS**

PRESENT	FH RT RR BM CB IA TB WS SS CJ	London Panel Member Chair London Panel Member London Panel Member London Panel Member Independent London Panel Member London Panel Member London Panel Member London Panel Member London Panel Member London Panel Member
IN ATTENDANCE	Maria Moriarty (MM) Reuben Young (RY) Gabriel Codjoe (GC)	Head of Resident Engagement & Customer Insight Research & Policy Manager Director of Housing
APOLOGIES	AP DL Jamie Ratcliffe	London Panel Member London Panel Member Executive Director of Business Performance and Partnerships
NOT PRESENT	VL AS GK	London Panel Member London Panel Member London Panel Member
MINUTE TAKER	Crystal Nicholson (CN)	Resident Engagement Officer

1	Welcome and Apologies	Action
1.01	CN reminds panel members the meeting would be recorded, for the purpose of the minutes, and destroyed upon approval from the Chair.	
1.02	FH reminds attendees to mute when not speaking and to raise hand to speak or type in the chat.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.01	There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Matters arising – Action Log	
3.01	FH raises the Readers Group recruitment and requests an update.	
3.02		

3.03	MM explains that we have been organising the training session which will now include BOSS your writing and Mary Gober Training that staff have received in-house.	CN
3.04	MM and CN confirm training date scheduled 7 th November and we have recruited 5 residents. Once training is complete, we will create a schedule on the different communication that goes out to residents and ask residents what they think we should prioritise as well as timeframes.	
3.05	CJ notes that she is interested in joining the training session.	
3.06	Action- CN to invite all panel members to join the Readers Group training session on the 7th November.	
3.07	FH raises the Charitable grant. MM explains we held an event on the 17 th September to consult residents on the fund. The team are currently in the process of reviewing the policy and procedure and MM sent this to attendees of the event to provide feedback by 16 th October. Then, it will go to ELT and after that we can begin promoting it.	
3.08	FH asked if we have received any feedback from resident since we have published the panel minutes on the website.	
3.09	MM confirms we haven't had any feedback, but we have let one resident who is interested in the minutes know that they are now published. We intend to develop the Get Involved section more, so we are asking residents what they would like the panels the give feedback on or discuss.	
3.10	FH requests an update on the resident story project. MM confirms we launched it two weeks ago in the newsletter, we are sending emails and texts in batches over three months.	
3.11	MM welcome feedback on whether residents would like Network Homes knocking on their door to engage with them on the project if it's not an urgent matter.	
3.11	CJ says she wouldn't appreciate it if it wasn't urgent due to personal circumstances. FH agrees that door knocking can seem intrusive. TB notes that because of the increase in scams, she doesn't think it's appropriate.	
4	Panel Members re-election	
4.01	FH mentions WS and G members initial term is up and has been asked to consider if they wish to extend their term.	MM
4.02	Action- MM to contact Geraldine and ask if she wishes to stay on for another term.	

4.03	WS sends apologies for not responding but says she would like to stay on for another three years	
4.04	FH notes that this is the last meeting for CB and thanks her for her membership and contributions	
4.05	CB thanks everyone for the experience.	
5	Rent increase 2021	
5.01	The rent increase policy was tabled and discussed.	
5.02	BM states that many people are experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic. How are we going to deal with that?	
5.03	MM explains the charitable fund and the increase of the charitable fund by ELT £50,000 every year. This may not be able to support residents through rent payments, but we are able to support them in other ways, such as food vouchers and furniture for residents. We are also utilising our in-house welfare team.	
5.04	BM expresses concern over those who are not claiming housing benefit.	
5.05	GC explains we have a welfare team dedicated to look at people who fall between those two stools.	
5.06	FH questions if this decision must be made to all types of property and tenure types,	
5.07	RY confirms the policy could be discriminatory.	
5.08	Action- share paper on areas and properties facing affordability pressures with FH	RY
5.09	BM and panel thank Network Homes for setting up the charitable fund.	
5.10	FH highlights the variety rent types and complexity, we should have clear language and communication on types of rents and what the increase would be for each different type.	
5.11	FH notes the importance of communication that goes out to residents to clearly explain what rent type they are and how it's been calculated, including the increase. This could be included in rent statements.	
5.12	MM has reviewed the communication on the rent increases that went out for rent increases and service charges. The team are looking into how we can improve the communication and make it more specific to individual	

5.13	<p>households. Once this communication has been reviewed, we will consult to the Readers Group to review the communication.</p> <p>Action- FH to email RY with more points and questions.</p>	FH
6	Allocations	
6.01	The allocations, overcrowding and under occupation report was tabled and discussed.	
6.02	Feedback from panel previously was the importance of information provision and being clear about decision-making.	
6.03	ELT proposed to give all larger homes to councils to tackle underoccupation in own stock to ensure we are meeting housing needs for the homes we own.	
6.04	RY proposed the two options for internal transfer list. Firstly, to keep the same policy and instead evaluate internal process of lettings team allocating homes to residents and councils. Or secondly, remove people from band B and below and signpost them to relevant housing council lists or support them in a mutual exchange.	
6.05	RT and TB do not agree with allocating over 75% of our larger properties to local authorities.	
6.06	RY notes more need would be met overall by giving larger properties to the local authorities.	
6.07	RY note that we will be consulting residents more widely and consulting other stakeholders such as local councils.	
6.08	RY will be writing paper to board in November on how we plan to consult on this policy.	
6.09	RY notes that Hertford Panel were supportive of it because 100% nominations of homes in Hertford goes to the Local Authority.	
6.10	BM states that Hertford and London are too different, and we shouldn't be categorizing.	
6.11	RY confirms housing need is greater in London but equally the housing need is just as great.	
6.12		

	FH raises concern on if it is a charitable decision. RY confirms it is because it meets more housing need overall, rather than prioritising residents who we have a duty for.	
6.13	RT asks if that means Network Homes residents will be unable to move into larger properties. RY explains that when larger properties become vacant will be give most of them to councils. However, residents who are statutory overcrowded or those who have serious medical needs, or a major damage to your property will be prioritised.	
6.14	FH raises concerns over people taking something that benefits them in the short term such as financial incentives. RY confirms incentives don't work. Incentives to downsize and pay less does work but isn't financially viable.	CN/RY
6.15	Action- FH recommends Readers Group to be a part of the communications that go out on that to ensure transparency.	
6.16	RT points to item 5.12 recording on under occupying. From a health and safety point of view and the Grenfell tragedy, we should know who is in the home. NH should be more proactive and demanding of residents to provide up to date details.	
6.17	RY confirms that we will shortly being a mailout to ask to update residents' details.	
6.18	BM states we should greater monitor those who are living in larger properties for longer periods, in case they are subletting.	
6.19	BM states we should look into extending street properties.	
6.20	TB notes that some extensions are being undertaken for residents who may have health issues and live in street properties. Occupational therapists can apply for funding from local councils. Is this a possibility?	RY
6.21	Action- to find out if this is a possibility	
6.22	SS asks what lobbying is the G15 doing to push for better long-term solutions?	
6.23	RY states that if we change our policy, we want to lobby the government and put something out publicly.	
6.24	SS asks to keep panel updated on the long term	
7	ASB Toolkit	
7.01	The ASB Toolkit was tabled and discussed.	

7.02	GC notes that the toolkit breaks down ASB into the various components and includes what to do in the circumstances. It also demonstrates what responsibility is the landlords and providing other options, such as contacting local authority or the police.	
7.03	CB whilst working at Hyde had workshops to develop the toolkit and then consulted residents on it. In the first year, it halved the amount of contact meaning that residents who needed help were prioritised.	
7.04	BM notes that housing associations not taken responsibility for a baby crying could be problematic. In extreme cases, the landlord may be responsible if a child is being neglected but didn't take any action to reports.	
7.05	Action- add a brief definition of what arson is for residents whose English isn't their first language.	GC
7.06	FH notes that the mediation services are a really good idea. However, it doesn't signpost on anywhere specific. Is there a mediation provider specifically that NH has worked with in the past?	
7.07	GC notes that we haven't stipulated the third party because it's something we would refer ourselves internally.	
7.08	SS asks how the budget will be promoted to residents?	
7.09	GC confirms that this has been a soft launch, we want to get updates and feedback first before we do a larger launch. We also wanted feedback from the panels first to provide feedback.	
7.10	BM raises concerns over communal properties, we should be ensuring residents know we are adhering to social distancing rules and wearing face masks.	
7.11	GC notes we haven't undertaken that communications yet and wouldn't be able to confirm this.	
7.12	CB confirms that there is signage on the schemes at Hyde to maintain social distancing. We are clear that we don't enforce it due to residents calling in. Instead, they encourage residents to speak to their neighbours.	
7.13	Action- Take back to discuss with colleagues to remind residents to maintain distance, wear masks and wash hands when they get in.	GC

8	Resident Engagement update	
8.01	Included the transparency and RE action plan, points been picked up around the new strategic objective. Check with the panels that its ok to close it down.	MM Panel members
8.02	Panel confirms to close it down.	
8.03	Action- consider a more effective way to feedback activity on new objective.	
8.04	Action- panel members to complete a survey on how the panels are running.	
8.05	The Big Winter Check in was introduced and discussed by MM.	
9	Continuous Improvement Panel Update	
9.01	MM provides update on the potential collapse of London and Hertford CIPs. The Chair of Customer Service Committee mentioned to keep the two CIPs and to continue to recruit for the Hertford Panel.	
9.02	RR apologises for the delays and provides update. The CIP will continue with the gas safety project and look into understanding accessibility of services for those who are disabled.	
10	Network Homes Performance Report	
10.01	We have provided the normal dashboard and a deep dive of a particular area of interest.	MM
10.02	MM welcomes feedback on new approach and asks whether panels are interested in the deep dives and what areas of interest.	
10.03	FH confirms he agrees and thinks this is a good idea.	
10.04	FH raised attention to the transactions paid within 30 days and a decrease from 80% to 50%.	
10.05	MM notes this isn't a conscious decision, but a knock-on effect of people working from home and having to juggle other priorities. Communications amongst staff to urge people to approve invoices to ensure they are paid within a timely manner.	
10.06	FH expresses concerns over workers and sub-contractors who may have delays in getting paid as a result.	
10.06		

	Action- Get a breakdown of how many of those invoices weren't paid within 30 days should have been paid within payment terms and the impact of this on individuals.	
11	Panel business	
11.01	RT raises issue on calling the Customer Service Centre. Requested a call back but nobody got back several times.	
11.02	FH clarifies that they place an automatic call back in the queue. It should work unless you have your number on withheld.	
11.03	Action- MM to speak with Freda on this for clarification.	MM
12.0	Minutes from the meeting of 14 July 2020	
	There were no comments	
13.0	Building safety	
	There were no comments	
14.0	Customer Services Strategy	
	There were no comments	

Chair

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