

Willow Tree Housing Partnership

Resident Scrutiny Panel

Project Report



<p><u>Scope</u></p> <p>To review communication with residents in respect of the repairs service and process</p>	
<p><u>WTHP Sponsor and Support</u></p> <p>Emily Shuttleworth - Housing Service Operations Lead Operations Management Team - Property and Business Support Team Leaders Governance Officer support in coordination and communication with Resident Scrutiny Panel (RSP)</p>	
<p><u>Objective</u></p> <p>The aim of the Review and what we want to investigate</p>	<p>The overarching objective is to provide tenants who raise a repair assurance that a job is being actioned appropriately, passed to the contractor and that information is being shared with the tenant to manage their expectations and give assurance that matters are progressing. Tenants should have the ability to provide feedback after an appropriate period to ensure works have been completed adequately or know what to expect if things go wrong.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine the channels residents can raise repairs • What journey does a repair then take from being raised until completion • What touch points take place and feedback to residents along with clarity of how long it will take to complete • How clear is the process and information that is shared with tenants who raise a repair? Does it manage their expectations? • What feedback is sought after a repair has been completed to ensure satisfaction • If things go wrong who should a tenant contact
<p><u>Background</u> - Reasons for choosing the review</p>	
<p><u>External context</u> Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards</p>	<p><u>Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard</u></p> <p>Outcomes landlords must deliver about being open with tenants and treating them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.</p> <p><u>Safety and Quality Standard</u></p> <p>Registered providers must provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible.</p>

<p><u>WTHP corporate context</u></p> <p>Values and key objectives</p>	<p>Values: STRIVE</p> <p>SUPPORTING COLLABORATION Enabling staff and tenants to work together to achieve shared goals</p> <p>TRUST AND HONESTY Being willing to listen and learn and be open when we need to improve</p> <p>RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING All colleagues and residents can expect mutual courtesy and empathy when times are challenging</p> <p>INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM Ensuring at all times that we conduct ourselves in a way that reflects the importance of the service we provide</p> <p>VERSATILE AND INNOVATIVE By embracing opportunities and new ways of thinking that will enhance how we deliver</p> <p>EQUAL AND INCLUSIVE By celebrating difference and ensuring that we do not operate in a way that excludes anyone</p> <p>Strategic objectives:</p> <p>People – we will invest in and listen to all voices and seek learning to improve outcomes for all</p> <p>Property – we will maintain and manage property that we and our tenants are proud of</p> <p>Place – we will ensure that a positive connection to home as a safe and sustainable place is central to our work</p> <p>Planet – we will create homes and services that protect the future</p>
<p><u>Project report and findings</u></p>	
<p>Three members of the RSP met in person at the WTHP Plymouth office on 3 July 2025 to undertake the project with a task and finish approach.</p> <p>Also attending were the Housing Service Operations Lead, Property Team Leader, Business Support Team Leader and Governance Officer.</p> <p>The following areas were reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channels in which residents can raise repairs • Repair journey to completion, including customer touch points • How clear the process and information is that is shared • Resident feedback and complaints <p><i>Channels in which residents can raise repairs</i></p> <p>★★★★☆</p> <p>The Panel discussed and outlined the following methods of reporting repairs:</p> <p>1 – Online via the website – can take a while to get the ball rolling and a personal acknowledgement would be welcomed.</p> <p>2 – Through My Tenancy portal – you need a PIN (tenant reference number) to access this, there is no option to be sent your PIN if you don't know it.</p> <p>3 – By phone – can be hard to get through.</p>	

4 – By email – an automated response is received but nothing further.

5 – In person – could visit the office though no guarantee anyone will be there; or can advise Housing Officer or Property Inspector if they are visiting.

Recommendations:

- Repair request forms to send to residents to complete and return when they have a repair, consider asking in the surveys who would like this option in place.
- Communications to be sent out to all residents reminding them of My Tenancy, how to use it and how they access their tenant reference number.
- For Business Support Team (BST) to reply to all repairs requests advising what will happen next.
- Explore raising repairs through a texting service and using WhatsApp.
- Explore possibility of tracking repairs through My Tenancy.

The Panel felt that faith with WTHP can be lost when no response is received but overall felt there were a good variety of different ways in which a repair can be raised and rated this aspect 4/5 stars.

Repair journey to completion



The Business Support Team Leader and Property Team Leader spoke to the Panel about what happens at WTHP when a repair is reported. This included a demonstration on the Pyramid housing management system and detailed the steps of logging and coding the repair before sending over to the appropriate contractor.

For a simple repair the contractor has 5 working days to phone the tenant to book in an appointment. If they are unable to make contact after three attempts they refer the repair back to WTHP who will continue to try and contact the tenant.

For more complex cases, where a repair can't be completed at the initial visit, a quote for additional works may be required. This would need to be approved once received by WTHP and the works order varied on Pyramid. The contractor operative would explain this to the tenant verbally but there are then no proactive updates being received by customers and it can be over 28 days before they are contacted again.

Recommendations:

- Suggest contractors try to email or text tenants if unable to reach by phone.
- Contact tenants to update on progress of more complex repairs
- Explore online tracking system

The Panel felt that more could be done to keep tenants updated on the progress of repairs and any delays and rated this aspect 2/5 stars.

Clarity of the process and information shared

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The Panel discussed their experiences of having no communication after reporting a repair other than a contractor calling to book an appointment. No information is shared about the process and what will happen next if a repair is reported online but is given when reported by phone. There was a common experience of contractors arriving to carry out different works to those the tenant had requested.

Recommendations:

- For Business Support Team (BST) to reply to all repairs requests advising what will happen next.
- Contact tenants to update on progress of more complex repairs.

The Panel found that more can be done to enable tenants to understand the repairs process and what to expect after reporting a repair, particularly when reported by email or where there is a delay with a repair being completed. This aspect was rated 2/5 stars.

Resident feedback and complaints

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The Housing Service Operations Lead updated the Panel as to the monthly repairs satisfaction surveys now being carried out by Acuity, sharing the satisfaction scores received in May 2025. These are providing much better data than the previous method used which was a text message scoring survey, sent once a repair had been completed.

Recommendations:

- Smiley face feedback could be added to online tracking system if put in place.
- Consider sending surveys out by email to customers who don't answer the phone call survey.
- Add link to website "how to make a complaint" to email signatures.

The Panel found the new satisfaction survey method to be an improvement and felt that it was not obvious how to make a complaint when things go wrong. Overall this area was rated 4/5 stars.

Next Steps

- Draft report to be approved by RSP
- Report to be shared with Board for information
- Head of Housing and Customer Experience to develop plan to prioritise and action the recommendations