

Riverside Supported and Sheltered Residents' Scrutineer Group

Review of RECHG Customer Services 2013

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Section One: Method and Approach

1 Topic Selection

The Scrutineer Group set out clear criteria for selection of its first 'test case' project including need for the project to:

- Engage with residents of supported and sheltered housing and to gain the service user perspective of the service received
- Benefit as wide a range of residents as practically possible in terms of location and type of accommodation
- Examine the standards that Riverside ECHG offers and to compare these against residents' perceptions and experience
- Compare the service provided against expectations set out by the regulators of social housing (the Homes and Communities Agency), and, the regulators of care services, (the Care Quality Commission)
- Identify the efforts made by Riverside ECHG to take account of needs of supported and sheltered residents in comparison to those of general needs residents

In considering the range of services provided the Scrutineer Panel examined information sources provided by RECHG including:

- Key Performance Indicators
- Resident Satisfaction results
- The Social Housing Regulatory Standards
- The Care Quality Commission Assessment Standards

Outcomes of initial examinations proved difficult in identifying clear direction towards any specific service that would meet their criteria in terms of, potential benefit all residents. Trends of information did show that, resident communications were less satisfactory than other areas, and, that outcomes of resident contact was also, less satisfactory. The Scrutineer Panel identified that review of resident perceptions of Customer Services would be the best choice of first topic. This subject would have the potential to benefit a broad range of residents using the service.

TPAS advised that this would be a challenging first project and helped the group to scope out key lines of investigation. The group agreed that it was important to have a clearly defined scope to ensure a manageable project.

2. Scope of the Project

a) Review of key Riverside Publications

The Group agreed that focus should look at the information provided by Riverside ECHG and to review, to what extent the organisation ‘says what it does, and, does what it says’. The key documents examined were:

- Riverside Service Pledge
- Riverside Customer Care Standards
- Riverside Complaints Policy

Each member of the group studied the current published documents relating to, customer service: These all being provided to residents at the start of their tenancy, provided on request and available from schemes, housing offices and the Riverside website.

b) Gaining an understanding of arrangements in place for RECHG Customer Services

The Scrutineer Group wanted to gain an understanding of how services were delivered, staff structures and any difference in comparison to the approach to delivery to general needs residents of Riverside UK. Simon Allcock was identified as the appropriate officer and attended a meeting with the Scrutiny Panel to deliver a presentation and respond to questions.

c) Structured Residents’ Interview and Survey

To obtain the residents’ perception of Riverside ECHG Customer Services the Scrutiny Panel used the stated commitments set out in the key Riverside publications to inform development of a structured residents’ survey.

To ensure that the survey outcomes would be representative of Riverside ECHG supported and sheltered residents a programme of interviews was scheduled balancing:

- A spread of supported and sheltered housing schemes nationally
- A mixture and balance of the type of supported housing schemes

In total 72 surveys were conducted nationally by members of the Scrutineer Panel, visiting and interviewing residents from 32 RECHG schemes nationally.

d) Secondary reality-checks

i) Complaints Policy Information

Following the initial round of sheltered housing surveys clarity of complaints process and policy information was emerging as an issue for residents. The Scrutiny Panel decided to conduct a website based activity reviewing published complaints processes of other social housing groups where these provided sheltered and, or supported housing services.

ii) Customer Service Centre

Also, following the initial round of sheltered housing services issues emerged regarding the handling of calls by the Customer Call Centre and one member of the group conducted a visit and a staff interview.

e) Consideration of findings and recommendations with RECHG Management

Once the desk-based and reality-checking activities were completed the Scrutineer Group considered outcomes and formed initial recommendations in advance of a meeting with the RECHG Director of Operations, John Glenton, and, the Regional Manager Simon Allcock.

The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the feasibility of recommendations. The group felt that for reasons of accountability all management responses should be documented whether they would or would not be supportive of initial recommendations or not.

Section Two: Findings

1. Key Riverside Publications

a) The Riverside Service Pledge

The Scrutiny Panel analysed this document to verify that this document sets out the standards of service for:

- **Resident contact** across a range of methods including by telephone, through visiting offices, by means of homes visit or through written correspondence
- **Gas Servicing** the process for annual gas serving visit from making arrangements through to what to expect when the contractor operative arrives
- **Repairs** setting out the process for reporting, how priorities will be applied
- **Keeping in Touch** setting out how the organisation will keep in touch with residents throughout the tenancy period
- **Rent and Service charges** setting out how residents will be informed of rent and service charges and the details that will be provided
- **Help and Advice** setting out the role of staff and sign-posting to more detailed information on rents
- **Working Together** promoting how residents can access information about how to be more involved
- **Managing your Neighbourhood** setting out standards for how staff will work with residents in area management
- **Working with You** setting out how residents can make a complaint

b) The Riverside Customer Care Policy Summary 2011

The policy summary sets out what Riverside aims to do:

- Set clear and meaningful performance standards in consultation with customers
- Publicise the standards and its performance against them
- Tell customers about its service, the help that is available, and how they can get the most out of what it provides
- Ensure that access to its service is available in as wide a variety of formats as possible including telephone, face-to-face, web site etc. So far as is possible, aim to deal with queries at the first point of contact and ensure that services are delivered “right first time”
- Provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of customers
- Make additional services available if required, such as hearing enhancements and translation services
- Have informed, trained, polite and friendly staff delivering services in a way that is convenient to the customer
- Tell customers how they can communicate with Riverside and provide feedback
- Make it easy for people to say when they are not happy with its service and act swiftly to put mistakes right. This may include awarding financial redress
- The Riverside Group Limited (referred Riverside) will comply with all legal and regulatory requirements in relation to its policies
- Carry out a customer insight exercise to better understand customers’ behaviours, needs and aspirations

- Give value for money by budgeting carefully and using resources efficiently and effectively
- Continually seek ways of improving the quality of the services it provides.
- Respect customers' privacy and handle all data in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- Treat all customers with fairness and respect.
- Have a complaints process that is clear, simple, and accessible, which aims to resolve complaints promptly, politely and fairly.

c) The Riverside Complaints Policy

This document sets out how to make a complaint and the stages involved in seeking a solution. Details also clarify things that the organisation cannot help with. Targets for response are set out and details of the potential range of outcomes are detailed. The process for how the complaint will be managed is set out.

2. Review of Regulatory Standards and Expectations

a) Social Housing Regulatory Standards

The standards set out include, requirements under the Consumer Standard for Empowerment and Involvement to ensure that standards, policies and strategies are subject to resident scrutiny and consultation. However these fall short of prescribing specific requirements for customer service and therefore, it was impossible to ascertain or conclude that Riverside ECHG complies or fails to comply with requirements on the basis of published documents. The Scrutineer Panel also observed that specific expectations relevant to the provision of supported and sheltered housing is limited to Adaptations (through the Home

Standard), and, requirements to ensure equality and diversity (through the Empowerment and Involvement Standard).

b) Care Quality Commission Standards

The standards set out by the Care Quality Commission provide more detailed requirements to take account of individual needs for support, encouragement, and empowerment to enable life goals for success, health, and independence.

3. Analysis of Residents' Surveys

32 Sheltered and Supported Schemes were visited and interviews took place with 72 residents. Of those interviewed all had been residents with RECHG for 5 years or less. This was not an intentional plan but proved to be the case.

i) Residents' awareness of Performance Standards

51 Out of 72 (71%), residents were either unaware or unsure if they knew about the existence of performance standards.

ii) Where residents' look out for information on RECHG Service Standards?

No. of Residents'	Where they would look
46	Newsletters
11	Leaflets
6	Other means (including Scheme Staff)
8	Did not know where they would find out
1	Would refer to all above and website

iii) Where residents would go if they needed Policy information

No. of Residents'	Where they would look
49	Directly to Scheme Managers or staff
2	Either to Scheme staff or Customer Service Centre
1	Either to Scheme staff or Tenant Rep
2	Either to Scheme staff or Website
8	Directly to Customer Service Centre
3	Look on Notice Boards
7	Did not know where to go

iv) How residents' would get help from Riverside ECHG when staff are not available at their scheme?

No. of Residents'	Where they would look for help
11	Would use the emergency cord/button
3	Would either use emergency cord or call CSC
36	Would directly call the CSC
1	Would call Elderly Care or CSC
1	Would email or call CSC
1	Would call alternative schemes
19 (26%)	Did not know what they would do

v) Do residents' think Riverside ECHG offers them enough variety and choices in the way they receive information?

No. of Residents'	Views of Residents on variety and choice in the way they receive information
42 (>58%)	Felt RECHG offers enough choice and variety
19 (>26%)	Felt RECHG should offer more choice
11 (>15%)	Were unsure or did not know

vi) Residents' suggestions for improvements to the way they receive information from Riverside ECHG

No. of Residents'	Improvement suggestions
14 (>19%)	More Face-to-Face updates
2	Generally, More Frequent Updates
3	More Frequent Updates and Use of Notice Boards
1	More Info on Website
50 (>69%)	Did not provide any answer to this question

vii) Residents' views of Riverside Staff attitudes

No. of Residents'	Views of Staff Attitudes
46 (<64%)	Friendly, Polite and Well Trained
8	Friendly and Polite but not well informed
12 (>16%)	Issues were raised
6	Did not answer the question

viii) Residents' views information provided in a convenient manner to suit residents

No. of Residents'	Views of convenient information provision
47 (>65%)	Information is provided conveniently for residents
7 (<10%)	Information is not provided in a personal manner
5 (<7%)	Not Convenient provision
9 (12.5%)	Raised issues, mostly where scheme staff provision was ok but beyond this not good from RECHG staff
4	Did not know

ix) How Residents would go about making complaints

No. of Residents'	Approach Residents; would take
13 (18%)	Would use the Complaints Procedure
31 (>43%)	Would approach the Scheme staff/manager
7 (<10%)	Would approach Scheme staff/manager or CSC
4 (<6%)	Would go direct to CSC by phone or letter
1	Would use Emergency Pull cord
1	Would go directly to Director
2	Would take to a local or scheme meeting
1	Would use the website
1	Would take to Scheme staff/manager or go to Regional Manager
1	Would write to RECHG anonymously
10 (<14%)	Did not know

x) Resident confidence in RECHG will deal with their Complaints

No. of Residents'	Confidence Levels of Residents
36	Confident
2	Confident in Scheme staff/manager but less for non-scheme based staff
20	Not confident
13	Did not know
1	50-50 view

xi) Residents' 'actual' experience measured against RECHG Service Standards

General Service Standards	Yes Always	Mostly	Rarely	Depends which Officer
Polite and courteous?	47	20	1	4
Give you their name?	38	9	5	8
Explain things clearly and avoid jargon?	35	17	14	6
Respect your privacy?	59	8	1	4
Handle all data in accordance with Data Protection Act?	60	4	0	8
Provide additional services available if required such as hearing Loops or Translation services?	22	1	2	47

xii) Call Centre Standards – Residents' Experience

Call Centre Standards	Yes	No	Unsure	Positive Experience	Negative Experience	Unstated Experience
Have you ever called the centre?	34	38	0			
Is the call centre always open when you call	33	0	1			
Was your call answered in under 45 seconds	12	6	15			
Was your enquiry resolved in one telephone call	9	5	19			
Positive Experience				11	2	21

xiii) Customer Access to Offices

Office Access - Service Standards	YES	NO	No Access
Have you ever visited a RECHG office?	14	55	3

Of those 14 attending local offices just 3 residents responded to questions on waiting time and space for private discussions. There were no negative responses.

xiv) Response to letters from Residents

Response to written-letter contact - Service Standards	YES	NO
Have you ever written to RECHG	16	56

Out of the 16 residents who had written to RECHG, 6 told us that they had received a delayed response. 3 of those taking part also indicated that they had received an apology for the delay. Of these 6, the remaining 3 had not received any kind of explanation.

xv) Response to emails from Residents

Response to written- email contact - Service Standards	YES	NO
Have you ever sent an email to RECHG	5	67
Did you receive a response in 24 hours	2	3
Did you receive an explanation for any delays in responding to your email	1	2

xvi) Residents' experience of Home Visits

Home Visits - Service Standards	
Have you ever asked for a Riverside Home Visit?	Y = 8 N = 64
Was the issue you had an emergency	Y = 5 N = 3
How long did you wait for your Home Visits	All cases 2-3 days
Has the service been tailored to your needs "Your Service, Your Way"	Y = 28 N = 14 Partially = 4 Unaware or Unsure = 26

xvi) Residents and Complaints

Complaints - Service Standards	
Have you ever felt that you wanted to make a Complaint to RECHG?	Yes = 33 No = 39
Did you make the Complaint?	16 out of the 33 (<49%), residents who had felt they wanted to complain had decided not to make their complaints to RECHG
If not, why not?	Of the 16 residents who had decided not to complain 7 would not say why this was the case. Comments "It's not worthwhile" (1) "Didn't feel that the staff would be happy" (2) "Fear of being blocked" (1)
If you did complain, how soon did you get a response?	Out of the 17 residents who did complain to RECHG they reported initial responses as follows: 3 Days = 1 4 Days = 1 1 Week = 2 2 Weeks = 2 Unsure = 9 No response = 2
Were you provided with good information on how to complain?	11 = Yes 10 = No 12 = Were unsure Comments "I was just given a complaints form" "No response was given by RECHG to me personally" "There was not enough personal help given to help me complain"

<p>Was there anything in the information provided that put you off complaining?</p>	<p>6 residents indicated that the information provided did or could have put them off complaining but we have no specific details or comments about what the issues were.</p> <p>12 residents were not put off complaining by anything in the information 18 residents were unsure</p>
<p>Were you offered any support to help you make your complaint</p>	<p>12 residents were not offered any help or support with their complaint. 3 residents were offered help and support.</p>
<p>Comments that Residents' asked Scrutineers to include</p>	<p>Would like more contact with team leaders, area managers and head office staff</p> <p>Better consultation and regular meetings</p> <p>Full time scheme manager to work Kings Court only and not cover other schemes</p> <p>More contact with policy makers and head office staff</p> <p>Feel a spring clean of furniture fabrics due to incontinence, less policy and more individual attention. One size does not fit all, I would like residents to be content and happy</p> <p>Move smoke alarms</p> <p>Keep staff consistent i.e. Scheme managers to stay at schemes longer</p> <p>Managers should tell us face-to-face when things are changing before they happen</p> <p>More contact with Higher level Riverside staff</p> <p>I feel it's wrong for some changes to be made to accommodation when others cannot have these changes made, all paying same rent, one rule for all</p> <p>Not very helpful - had to alter service schedules to suit RECHG computer systems</p> <p>Better means</p> <p>More staff at weekends</p>

	<p>Make improvements to scheme</p> <p>More night staff</p> <p>More personal communication better personal care</p> <p>I think it is impossible for everyone to be trained to cope</p> <p>If they would keep on top of “accommodation” checks</p> <p>It will be nice to be able to make supported living feel more like home</p> <p>Intercom doesn’t work</p> <p>Choice of colour scheme in the dining room</p> <p>separate meetings for general needs and supported and sheltered</p> <p>negative feedback and very slow response time requests to be actioned</p> <p>Better communication with senior management, this would help and give more confidence to residents/tenants</p> <p>Feel left out (NB – This was the oldest tenant that was interviewed)</p> <p>For RECHG to be more visible and more proactive</p> <p>More face to face communication with senior management, staff and have more understanding of tenants real needs</p> <p>What do CSC class as an emergency, we have a resident with dementia, CSC say the issue is not important, people wait for carers</p> <p>They must be more aware of tenant issues</p> <p>Better communication</p> <p>Would be better if it went back to the scheme manager on behalf of the tenant, especially those at risk</p>
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Electric meter reading - need access to the meters

Remember we are all individuals, are fairly well educated and are aware of local and national issues, please do not talk down to us

Better and more personal communication more meetings and area managers

Better communication

Listen and understand more

Needs a list of general needs properties and voids needs support with family issues

Need a replacement front door

4. **Secondary Reality Checks – Comparison of other Sheltered and Supported Housing Provider Complaints Information**

i) **Other Landlords Complaints Procedures**

- **Sanctuary Group** information on the website and found that if complaints are not initially resolved the company launches an investigation but no stages are set out. Information was felt to be extremely poor.
- Review of procedures of **Riverside ECHG, Guinness Partnership and the Together Housing Group**. Both Guinness and Together Housing Group were felt to be providing better quality information for residents on the process.
- Review of procedures of **Aster Communities**. Most of the complaints were repairs and complaints are responded to within 2 days to organise visits if required. The administrative support and all complaints to Aster Communities are facilitated by a team who are part of a wider customer services team.

ii) **Customer Service Centre Interview conclusions**

There are no specific special measures adopted for dealing with supported and sheltered housing residents. There is no flagged information immediately available to alert the customer service teams that they are being called by a supported or sheltered

housing resident. However, calls coming through the 'Red Button' (pull cord system), are identified.

Section Three: Recommendations

R1: Clearer and more graphical performance information should be developed by Riverside ECHG to improve resident understanding, awareness and to encourage resident interest in monitoring and improving services

51 Out of 72 (71%), residents were either unaware or unsure if they knew about the existence of performance standards.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

This recommendation is achievable and the use of TV monitors in schemes could enhance and be useful to deliver other messages such as scheme and local events; signpost for other services.

We also suggested that Neighbourhood Forums and Regional Review meetings have an agenda item on Performance information and information from these cascaded back to schemes/meetings in addition to tenants' publications.

Action: SA to contact sheltered schemes that are currently using TV monitors in their reception area and gauge feedback from tenants/residents

R2: There should be greater use of scheme notice boards particularly, should sign-post to further information in Newsletters and on the website etc. Use of Notice Boards was identified as particularly critical where Scheme Manager/Staff presence is lower.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

Both agreed with this recommendation and agreed it is achievable

R3: Leaflet information in schemes is often out of date: Information provided at schemes should be routinely checked to ensure it gives up-to-date information as part of scheme management duties.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

Monitoring of out of date information is already included as part of the Scheme Evaluation process carried out by the RECHG Quality Officer and the tenant inspectors. Action Plans are developed for team leaders/scheme managers to correct any issues such as these. If these are issues raised in inspections and included in action plans then feedback to inspectors should be done at the 6 monthly reviews.

However, we will take up action to tighten up the process in this area.

R4: 2/3 of respondents didn't initially understand what was meant by the term 'Standards'. Efforts to improve residents understanding of the standards of service they can expect, and indeed, not expect, should be built into service improvement plans. Improvement in the level of awareness should be scheduled for review within 6 months of implementation of improvement actions.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

We agree that there needs to be some work to address this issue and review of the Service Pledge document.

- 121 sessions for Supported and Sheltered Schemes staff can be organised
- RECHG suggests that a project should be initiated for the Communications, Compliance and Quality post-holder.

R5: The level of residents' without landlines was found to be relatively high with a lot moving to mobile phones. However, there was a reluctance to use these to call the contact centre due to high costs. The Scrutiny Panel feels that Riverside should investigate options for alternative means of contact as the current system is discouraging some residents to report problems and increasing the reliance on reporting through Scheme Managers who may not be on-site.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

We will look for a response from Anna Bishop who is the Head of Customer Service.

R6: There a high level of concerns about, the low level of communications to deal with common service issues with staff beyond the scheme staff. Residents' perceptions generally being that, scheme staff do all they can but that issues beyond their control achieve a poor response. Some residents expressed that they felt bad repeatedly raising issues with scheme staff who were unable to progress them. There were considerable views that there is a need for routine meetings at schemes for residents to meet with more senior staff who are not scheme-based to help resolve issues faster. Scrutiny recommends that there should be opportunities for scheme residents to meet with more senior non scheme-based staff at least quarterly. Scrutiny also recommends that some form of involvement for scheme representatives should be considered at least regionally so that common issues with the service can be reviewed and monitored with regional management.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

These issues should be raised at Scheme Meetings, Neighbourhood Forums. Twice each year there are Regional Review Meetings that should deal with unresolved issues from Neighbourhood Forums, Performance and Feedback. If residents feel that issues are being blocked the Quality Monitoring Officer should be required to attend.

R7: A marginal number of responses suggested that beyond scheme management some staff lack awareness of the Riverside Customer Standards. Scrutiny recommends that training evaluations should routinely test staff understanding and take appropriate action to improve knowledge and understanding across the service.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

We agree and will theme a refresher session on service standards into the next Sheltered Housing Conference.

R8: There was a low level awareness of the Complaints Process, with some residents indicating no knowledge that Riverside has a complaints process. Scrutiny recommends that routine scheme meetings should take action to raise awareness of residents of the complaints process.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

We agree that both Scheme Meetings and the Newsletter to aim to develop a greater level of awareness of the Complaints Process and support in making a complaint either from scheme staff or by accessing Customer Service Centre support.

R9: There were some indications that residents who had wanted to complain had not done so due to a belief that these would be blocked, not be dealt with or be poorly handled. Just less than 49% of those who felt they had reason to complain told Scrutiny that they had not done so. Scrutiny findings revealed that the process can be difficult if the complaint is directly relevant to a member of the scheme-based staff. Some residents told us that they have verbally complained to staff but don't hear back. Scrutiny believes that this is a Quality issue and a review of the Complaints Process, staff management at scheme-based levels and alternative options should be considered by Riverside.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

We think that the process is ok and it does offer the option to go through the Call Centre. We agree that we need to do something to ensure that people are clearer and will link actions to that for recommendation 9 above.

We will ensure that refresher information reminds staff that they must follow the Policy in place for this.

R10: 4% of residents indicated that they didn't use local offices because they believed they were not allowed to. Scrutiny recommends that where there are locally accessible offices these should be promoted to residents within the schemes they live in. A simple poster on notice-boards is suggested as a minimum.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

Realistically for most schemes residents should use the Customer Service Centre whatever issue they have. In some areas local offices are not equipped to deal with issues and other areas do not have local offices. It is better all round to use the Customer Service Centre if the issue cannot be resolved through the scheme staff.

R11: Responses to emails and letters were reported by residents as being fairly hit and miss. Around 50% of those who had used this method reported that they often received an acknowledgement but the follow-up generally very delayed and requiring residents to chase responses. Scrutiny recommends that Riverside review management of written communications, response times, and should detail the differences to be expected for different types of concern raised.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

It is agreed that there are instances where communications are not logged correctly. Systems are currently being rolled out where every contact with the organisation is recorded through the CRM (Customer Relations Management) system. This is being rolled out with across

our general needs, sheltered staff and the aim is to ensure that our tenants and residents are responded to within our policy. Within this system is an escalation procedure and this will highlight the gaps where there are failures to communicate and respond to tenants and residents.

It was also mentioned here that in the New Year a role will be introduced for a National Compliance & Communications Manager. This person's responsibility will include tracking and making improvements to communication.

R12: Home Visits by staff was indicated as an area where residents lacked awareness that they could request these (10% of respondents said I didn't know I could ask for a Home Visit). Scrutiny understand that this could be an area increasing time pressures on staff resources but does recommend that a policy outlining the circumstances where a Home Visit can be requested should be communicated to residents to raise awareness of what they can and cannot expect.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

The welfare of our tenants is important. With pressure on resources due to funding cuts, RECHG still needs to consider how best to do this. We suggest a "menu of services" where customers are able to choose the level of service that is being offered.

Counter-comment from Scrutiny Group

We think this is a disappointing response and feel that tenants and residents should have the right to request a home visit outside of special care and support circumstances

R13: Worryingly, 25% of respondents indicated that staffs do not, always have an identity card with them and that the increased use of agency staff means these staffs don't always have these at all. Scrutiny suggests that arrangements with agencies should look at identifying solutions to overcome this problem and promote outcomes to residents.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

Agreed: All of RECHG's staff members need to be reminded to wear their badges at all times. Therefore, a quick solution to this will be that a reminder email will be sent to managers to cascade to their teams for this to be addressed.

R14: Scrutiny particularly focused on the 'Your Service, Your Way' commitments and surveyed residents on the area of service tailoring to needs. The response to this area was very poor, over 55% either said they had not heard of it, or it didn't happen. Members of Scrutiny conducting survey reported to meetings that they felt the issue was more about the term 'service tailoring' and the extent of understanding. Most felt that when they talked to residents about having their needs assessed, most agreed this happens soon after they move-in to their home. However, reviews of these were found to be inconsistent across schemes with some being routinely delivered and others not reviewed, never carried out, or the process is not recognised by the resident. Scrutiny recommends that Riverside looks at raising the profile of the function of 'needs assessments' and works toward developing greater

resident awareness. However, Scrutiny also recommends that Riverside should review internal monitoring of this area and satisfy itself that these are indeed conducted initially and routinely reviewed. Ultimately, Scrutiny is unsure that the branded leaflet 'Your Service, Your Way' is an effective communication for supported and sheltered residents.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

RECHG can prove that 90% of these happen. We need them for our 'Needs and Risks Assessments'. The Key Performance Indicators are set by RECHG and are not part of a benchmarking set.'

RECHG is interested to see the split on these results between sheltered and supported schemes, (see Appendix 2).

We will come back to you on this one.

Counter-comment from Scrutiny - Further surveys were logged after the meeting with Simon and John. Scrutiny feels that it is still not a perception of Residents and recommends RECHG explores whether Quality spot checks are done to test this

R15: Another area surveyed looked at the extent of 'sign-posting' additional help and support options beyond Riverside services. Response to the survey indicated that information is often out of date or doesn't exist at all. Scrutiny recommends that scheme communications, notice-boards etc. should be improved to ensure that support options beyond Riverside Services are well promoted to residents. Some comments suggested that scheme-staff and particularly, agency staff are poorly informed. Scrutiny suggests that there should be a system of staff-briefing information that ensures the effective provision of support options for residents.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

This is agreed and once TV Screens are provided at all schemes these will also contain sign-posting information.

Staff bulletins will also reinforce messages particularly as support packages change, as is likely over the coming period.

R16: 15% of residents complained that there are too many staff changes and that this has an impact on confidence of residents to communicate with scheme-based staff. Scrutiny recognises that it is difficult to ensure consistent staff of schemes however; more efforts to keep residents involved where these occur would seem to be appropriate. More face-to-face communications from senior staff responsible such as Area Managers should be considered by Riverside as a minimum standard where scheme-based staff changes are planned.

Management Response: Simon Allcock and John Glenton

Agreed, we feel that more face-to-face contact when changes are occurring would mitigate concerns and anxieties. We do currently expect this to be in place now but we are aware that it does not consistently happen. We are committed to ensuring that residents are more involved and informed when change happens in the future.

R17: Post meeting recommendation from Scrutiny: Scrutiny suggest that quarterly reports from Tenant Inspections/SET audits should be given to the RECHG Scrutiny Group for future scrutiny projects. These could inform future tenant inspections and improve standards and performance.

To conclude, Scrutiny requests that upon perusal and discussion of these recommendations by the RECHG Executive that they be provided with an Implementation Plan of actions and if a recommendation is not approved, that a response is also given.

Section Four: Recognised areas of good service identified

- ★ Overall residents who use the Customer Service Centre viewed this as a really good service
- ★ Commitment of Scheme Managers was highly valued generally by residents and most viewed that Scheme Managers do their very best to resolve issues and often go 'a further mile' in sorting out difficulties
- ★ Respect for residents' privacy by staff scored more than 93%
- ★ Polite and courteous staff also scored 93%
- ★ Home visits, when requested happen within 2-3 days consistently

Appendix 1: Background to the Riverside Supported and Sheltered Residents’ Scrutineer Group

<p>BACKGROUND</p>	<p>In November 2012 a group of RECHG tenants were invited to join a Scrutiny Panel with the object of looking at the services of the Supported & Sheltered Housing Schemes provided by Riverside English Church Housing Group. The name of the Scrutineer Group was to be “Riverside Supported & Sheltered Scrutiny Resident Group”.</p> <p>Our Mentor was Kate Newbolt of TPAS who would guide us through the necessary procedures of a Scrutineer Group, and the tasks that would be required for a successful project. Kate also offered indicators in her initial presentation of what service areas of social housing landlords made for good and bad first scrutiny projects.</p> <p>The purpose of the project was to examine the customer service delivery of Riverside ECHG in relation to the level of customer satisfaction of complaints handling and to review whether this meets their expectations.</p>
<p>OPERATION</p>	<p>We agreed that, we need to focus on what we are setting out to do, so that everyone is clear as follows;</p> <p>Our Agreed Overall Functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conduct a scrutiny review of Supported and Sheltered Housing services. • To evaluate and recommend improvements to the service. • To give accountability to wider residents, service users and the RECHG Board <p>Process of the Scrutiny Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly meetings to take place in Leicester as is the most central point for all • To select a topic that will benefit as broad a range of Supported and Sheltered Housing tenants and residents as possible. • To consider performance, satisfaction and resident intelligence as key aspects of the scrutiny review. • To interview the lead officer responsible for the selected service to enable the review to benefit from the contextual information related to the service. • To examine related information published by RECHG for those who use the service. • To conduct reality checks with tenants and residents using the service.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ascertain whether RECHG delivers the service according to the standards it has published. • To identify areas of the service that could be improved, and, to explain how? • To put our ideas for improvement before the managers responsible for the service and consider any difficulties there might be in implementing these. • To produce a final report making recommendations and setting out the evidence base of our findings. • To agree an implementation plan with relevant managers., for delivery of the recommendations that have been approved by RECHG, • To produce an article for the newsletter and website so that all tenants and residents are able to see what changes will be made. • To review how the project went and to identify any on-going support needed for future projects.
COMMUNICATIONS	It has been agreed that generally communications will be via emails and hard copy information to be provided to all members by post or at meetings. All members are to have each other member email and phone contacts where possible.
ACCOUNTABILITY	To be through notes of meetings, scheme briefings, newsletters and the website.
FORMAL INFORMATION REQUESTS	Agreed, to give 21 days' notice of information requests and a month's notice where requesting staff of RECHG to attend meetings with the Panel or to organise activities.
TERMS OF REFERENCE & CODES OF CONDUCT	TPAS to provide examples of these from best practice for the Panel to consider.
SUPPORT & RESOURCES	TPAS as mentors through first service review. RECHG to organise meetings, travel assistance etc. in line with RECHG policies e.g. expenses, training etc.

<p>CONTEXT OF RESIDENT-LED SCRUTINY</p>	<p>The group were informed that; Riverside has to report its performance to HCA (Homes & Communities Agency) at least Annually on things like financial viability, how well the business is governed by the Riverside Board and its service delivery performance. This as a statement in the Tenants’ Annual Report.</p> <p>HCA has set out National Housing Standards for all social landlords to comply with. There are 4 National Standards that Tenants and Residents can monitor to make sure their landlord is complying with requirements. Formal Tenant and Resident Scrutineer Groups can check out aspects of the landlords’ performance and make recommendations to the landlord Board for improvements to be made if they can produce evidence to justify changes that make sense. The RECHG Executive must consider these recommendations and explain any that they are not willing to approve.</p> <p>The National Standard also looks to make sure that whatever type of tenancy is offered the rights of the tenant are protected and the tenant responsibilities are clear to understand. But the standard also requires a fair system of allocation to be managed and many more areas of importance to tenants.</p> <p>The HCA also gives tenants the role to scrutinise and recommend better ways of delivering the service to the landlord decision-makers.</p> <p>Co-Regulation is a term often used to describe resident-led scrutiny. It is a Partnership with Independent principles putting tenants at the heart of regulating the services that they pay for.</p>
<p>KEY STEPS TO COMPLETION</p>	<p>Therefore the Key Steps to completing a Scrutiny Project will be;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a Topic • Scope the project • Understand the Service • Re-scope Project • Plan Reality Checks • Our Findings • Reporting

Appendix 2 – “Your Services, Your Way” Assessments

* Brackets indicate no. of Interviews

1. Confirmed YES has had Assessments
Woodchurch Court
Jack Common House (2)
Victoria Court
Crown Point (2)
St Georges Court
Woodend Court
Wakefield TPP
St Patricks
Shaw Street (2)
Power House (2)
Kings Court
Carlisle House
Pennine Court
Shephard Court (2)
Eastham House (2)
Southfields
Thorburn Court
Pembrook House
Cathedral Court
Willow Walk
Dean House
Cambridge Gardens

2. Confirmed NO Assessments
Dean House (2)
Kings Court (2)
Rowntree Close (2)
Trinity
Pennine Court
Woodend Court
Victoria Court
Linnet Court
Spring Court

3. Confirmed Partial Assessments
Power House
St Georges Court
Cathedral Court
Alexandra Court

4. Confirmed Unaware of Assessments
Victoria Court
Higham Way
Woodchurch Court (2)
Hamlet Court (2)
Pembrook House
Wakefield TPP
Jamaica House (2)
Willow Walk (2)
Cambridge Gardens
Hargreaves Court (2)
Kings Court
Trinity
Southfields
Linnet Court (2)
Thorburn Court
Cathedral Court (2)
Spring Court

NB: Scrutiny feels that the lack of understanding of the “Your Services, Your Way” information and the responses from tenants around being unaware of what “needs and Risk assessments” will need to be investigated further as to the reliability of RECHG’s own data and the scrutiny interviews that were done.