

Audit Commission Recommendations

Recommendation	
R1	<p>Strengthen the focus on customer care by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• developing and publishing a suite of measurable and challenging service standards in consultation with tenants;• developing new methods of involvement to engage a wider range of residents in the management of their homes and ensuring that resident involvement structures are representative of the population;• ensuring that complaints are systematically analysed to develop learning and that a compensation policy is introduced;• engaging tenants in mystery shopping exercises and quality checking of empty properties; and• developing an approach to financial inclusion.
R2	<p>Strengthen the focus on equality and diversity by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• developing a greater understanding of the profile of tenants and using this understanding to shape service delivery;• completing equality impact assessments on key areas of policy and service delivery and developing robust action plans to address any negative impact of policies and inform strategies on equality; and• monitoring contractors compliance with their equality and diversity policies and codes of conduct.
R3	<p>Strengthen the approach to value for money within the housing service by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• developing a robust understanding of how costs compare with peers;• reviewing service contracts to ensure that they provide the optimum cost and quality;• introducing value for money targets as part of performance management arrangements;• ensuring stock investment decisions maximise the long term sustainability of the stock through preventative and cyclical maintenance programmes, within available resources;• exploring opportunities for efficiencies through use of supply chain and shared procurement;• introducing incentives for tenants to pay rent by the most cost efficient means;• separating service charges from rents and giving a clear breakdown of service charges on rent statements and rent increase letters; and• investigating the availability of additional income to support stock investment such as through energy grants.

R4	<p>Improve performance in service areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring that repairs appointments are made at the first point of contact; • ensuring that detailed information on asbestos is provided to tenants where it is known to be present; • ensuring that cleaning and grounds maintenance specifications meet the needs of individual estates and are robustly managed, within the resources available; • reviewing the current tenancy agreement to ensure it meets the latest legislative requirements and considering the use of introductory tenancies; • developing a comprehensive action plan for achieving the Respect Standard; • clarifying the role of estate monitors in all aspects of the housing management service; • linking estate management budgets to the estate walkabout programme ensuring that tenants are fully involved in expenditure decisions; and • reviewing the aids and adaptations policies and procedures to ensure that there is a clear priority criteria for critical cases and that any waiting times are minimised.
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R5	<p>Strengthen performance management by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publishing up to date performance reports and targets on the website and in tenants newsletters; • ensuring that performance reports on aids and adaptations takes account of the whole process from initial request to completion; • implementing computer software which enables effective management of anti-social behaviour cases; and • reviewing service action plans to ensure that tasks are measurable and that outcomes and cost implications of all tasks is fully explained and understood.
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