Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard

Gill Butler, Chief Officer – Housing
Mike Bailey, Tenant Engagement & Wellbeing Senior Specialist

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

F&HDC’s starting point

- Housing service outsourced to East Kent Housing ALMO since 2011.
- Regulatory Notice issued in September 2019 following H&S compliance failings.
- Housing service returned to F&HDC in October 2020 - addressing the failings, investing in our stock and housing management and building back tenant confidence in F&H!
- This, and close working with Regulator, allowed the notice to be lifted in August 2021.

Our vision for the housing service is:
To create an excellent housing service – one that is digitally enabled, easy to deal with, and where tenants are at the heart of everything we do

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Tenant Engagement

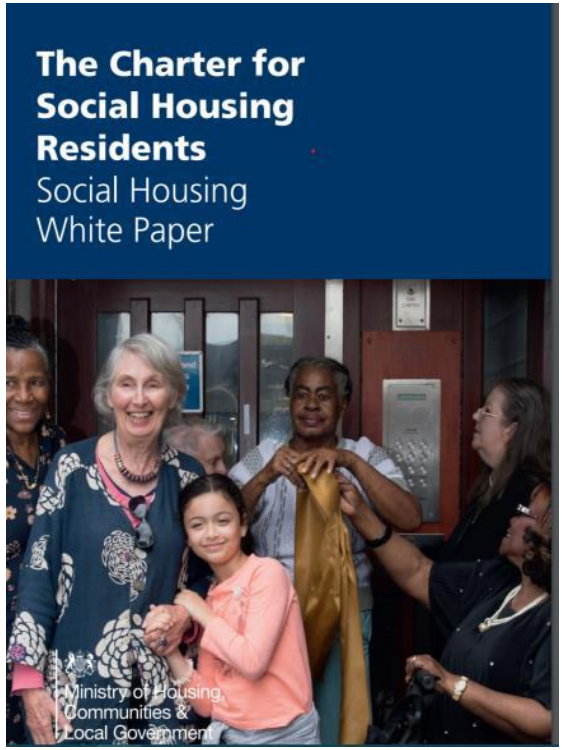
- Tenant satisfaction survey in 2020.
- Developed Tenant Engagement Strategy – Hearing our Tenants' Voice.
- High level Strategic Tenants' Advisory Panel (STAP).
- Starting to consider the Tenant Satisfaction Measures – using the draft measures a further Tenant-wide survey in May/June 2022.
- Using Tenant feedback to develop a Tenant Survey Action Plan.

Consumer regulation

Requirements of the current standard

<u>Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard</u>

- Appropriate communication that meets tenants' needs.
- Opportunities for tenants to influence and be involved in policies, service standards and performance.
- Treat tenants fairly and respectfully, and demonstrate understanding of tenants' needs.



Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard

Requirements of the revised standard

- **Fairness and respect:** *treat all tenants with fairness and respect.*
- **Diverse needs:** *take action to deliver fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services for all tenants.*
- **Engagement with tenants:** *take tenants' views into account in decision-making about how landlord services are delivered.*
- **Information about landlord services:** *communicate & provide information so tenants can use landlord services/ understand what to expect from their landlord, & hold their landlord to account.*
- **Performance information:** *collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in delivering services.*
- **Complaints:** *ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly.*

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Preparatory work

- Started early with tenant satisfaction surveying:
  - Survey in 2022 – same overall tenant satisfaction at 68%.
  - 2023 survey showed improved performance in all areas (except complaints) – with overall satisfaction at 71%, satisfaction that the home is safe at 78%, satisfaction that tenants are kept informed at 71%.
- Six monthly tenant newsletters *and* six monthly ***"your voice, our action"*** bulletins.
- Strategic Tenant Advisory Panel (STAP) – meet every two months, review policies/procedures and scrutinise performance information.
- Tenant Scrutiny Panel launched in 2023 – completed review of complaints and currently working on review of ASB.

FOLKESTONE & HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL
TENANT APPROVED

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Pilot ‘inspection’ by RSH

Regulator of Social Housing

The Regulator of Social Housing contacted F&HDC Nov.2022 - to test out their thinking around how they would be proactively regulating against the revised consumer regulation standards.

- A draft scoping framework – evidencing service outcomes:
  - compliance and stock data/repairs,
  - Accountability - transparency/tenant involvement
- Submitted lots of evidence and documentation in advance.
- Meetings with key senior staff.
- Observing a STAP meeting.
- Meeting separately with the Chair of STAP.
- Visiting some of our Independent Living schemes (sheltered housing for older people).

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Challenges and Learning

Challenges:

- Resourcing /admin.
- Gathering sufficient performance data.
- Demonstrating understanding of diverse needs.

Outcome: ***"Good evidence of compliance"*** – RSH ***"understand the challenges F&HDC face"*** and they recognised that we have a– ***"strong commitment of putting tenants at the heart of what we do"***

Learning:

- Engage early. Be open and honest – not just with residents, also with the Regulator – SELF REGULATION!

Folkestone & Hythe
District Council

Questions?

Contact:
Mike Bailey, Tenant Engagement & Wellbeing Senior Specialist
michael.bailey@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk
01303 853270

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Draft scoping framework

Regulator of Social Housing

Service Outcomes:

- Statutory compliance.
- Stock quality & repairs.
- Management of domestic abuse, safeguarding and safety of residents with additional needs.
- ASB and Neighbourhood Management.
- Tenancy.

Accountability:

- Fairness and respect.
- Diverse needs.
- Transparency.
- Complaints handling.
- Tenant involvement in decision-making.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council