

## Meeting notes for Extra Care Resident Forum

**Date:** Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Time:** 2pm – 4pm

**Resident Attendees:** Ian Devereux, 5 others

**Housing 21 Representatives:** John Simmonds (**JS**), Resident Engagement & Experience Manager, Corrinne Askaroff (**CA**), Strategic Operations Officer, Annabel Ellin (**AE**), Director of Audit, Assurance and Governance, Joanne Kinsella (**JK**), Housing Quality and Standards Lead, Janet Richards (**JR**), Head of Finance Business Systems, Andy Shaw (**AS**), Chief Financial Officer, Vanessa Pritchard-Wilkes (**VPW**), Head of Strategic Operations, Jamie Lindon-Lewis (**JLL**), Head of Extra Care - Central

Title of agenda item		Summary of discussion	Actions agreed including assignments and deadlines
1.	<b>Introductions by Chair</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tina Wathern (TW), Resident Engagement Lead has left Housing 21. JS will now be the main point of contact for the Forum.</li> </ul>	None
2.	<b>Actions from Last Meeting &amp; Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair has met with Kris Peach (KP), Managing Director of Extra Care, who thanked everyone who supported with his recent paper.</li> </ul>	None
3.	<b>Board Skills and Experience</b>	<p><b>AE</b> – presented information relating to current board and committee structures, described the role and remit of a board member.</p> <p><b>Queries raised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reference to lived experience in board member role.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>JS/Chair</b> to include digital inclusion and communication in next agenda.</li> <li><b>JS</b> to send scheme managers supporting</li> </ul>

		<p><b>Answer:</b> This is included as part of the recruitment process that sits with Company Secretary, Paul Hutton.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many resident board members are there?</li> </ul> <p><b>Answer:</b> 0. Currently two vacancies about to be recruited for.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can H21 promote the opportunity and engage residents who are not digitally included.</li> </ul> <p><b>Answer:</b> Being addressed as part of a working group.</p>	<p>material around digital inclusion work with meeting minutes.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Unreasonable Behaviour Policy</b></p>	<p><b>JK</b> – explained origin of new policy in response to changes in the complaints procedure from the Housing Ombudsman and would like comments/feedback from the group.</p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy presents as one-sided. What if the unreasonable behaviour is perceived as coming from H21 staff?</li> <li>• No reference in policy to higher authority or arbiter. Does Housing 21 have the final say?</li> <li>• Page 2 needs to be clearer when referencing family/external carers.</li> <li>• A standard approach is required when rolling policies and updates out to residents.</li> <li>• A multi-faceted approach to resident communication is needed to meet the needs of all.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>JK</b> to amend policy in line with comments wherever possible.</li> <li>• <b>JK</b> to include policy roll-out to residents within communications plan.</li> </ul>

<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Former Tenant Arrears Policy</b></p>	<p><b>JR</b> – Explained that previously, the responsibility of former tenant arrears has sat within the finance team, but there has been minimal success. The Board have asked to explore third party providers to continue this, and a tender process has been carried out. Sinclair Taylor is a specialist company with experience in working within social housing and with vulnerable people. It will operate on a ‘no win, no fee’ basis, and although more expensive than a flat fee offered by the alternative company, it is felt that Sinclair Taylor is a better fit.</p> <p><b>Comments and Queries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not made clear to residents what happens when they die.</li> <li>• Do arrears go to next of kin after a death?</li> <li>• Positive about the way the policy addresses vulnerability.</li> <li>• Why can’t these arrears be handled internally?</li> </ul> <p><b>Answer:</b> JR explained the Income Administration team are not resourced for this and it requires specialist engagement. AS advised it was felt that it could be more cost effective to outsource.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As these arrears will exist due to a sensitive issue, families etc may see the introduction of a debt collection agency at this time as the wrong thing to do.</li> <li>• The policy doesn’t reference keeping the scheme manager up to date, even though they are likely to still be a contact for the family.</li> </ul>	<p><b>JR/AS</b> to confirm with Sinclair Taylor if scheme managers can be added to the arrears portal as a contact.</p> <p><b>JS</b> to feed back to Heads of Service that annual review of resident information is required and necessary for this process.</p> <p><b>JR/AS</b> to look at the information provided to resident about arrears once they die or move into a care placement.</p>
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6.	<b>Affordability</b>	<p>VPW has been asked to explore what is meant by 'modest means' and would like thoughts and comments on this.</p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Term is outdated and although the principle is understood, the phrase itself is disliked.</li> </ul> <p><b>Question: do you think our properties are affordable? Are there certain groups that they are not affordable for?</b></p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable for those living in them because they are there, but unaffordable in the sense that some residents have arrears.</li> <li>Would prefer to consider value for money rather than 'affordable', as residents will understand what they are getting for their money.</li> <li>Not affordable for residents on a fixed income.</li> <li>What control does H21 have over allocations?</li> </ul> <p><b>Answer:</b> VPW explained it is different in Retirement Living, where most schemes have internal waiting lists with only a few having agreements</p>	<p><b>VPW</b> to collate responses and use to inform paper to the Board.</p>

		<p>with local authorities. JLL explained In Extra Care it is harder due to the care needs, but H21 are getting better at challenging inappropriate nominations.</p> <p><b>Question: Is H21's housing stock meeting the needs of older people?</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> For those it works for, it works really well.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Extra Care Heads of Service Update</b></p>	<p>JLL explained that moving forward, one of the heads of service will attend each forum meeting to give updates and answer questions.</p> <p><b>Update:</b> Cuppa with Kris even has been combined with Heads of Service catch ups to avoid multiple meetings. Questions from residents are encouraged and the forum will be asked for a topic that can be discussed at each meeting.</p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There needs to be more promotion and encouragement to attend.</li> <li>• The meeting could be shared in the lounge and attendance encouraged with free refreshments.</li> <li>• Notes should be put through doors rather than just posters in communal areas.</li> <li>• The posters need to be clearer about the meeting being online.</li> <li>• The QR code is no use to people who don't use smart technology.</li> </ul> <p><b>Update:</b> JLL leading on communications project, which has introduced a regional section to the</p>	<p><b>JL</b> to review posters with QR codes to ensure it is also clear it is online.</p> <p><b>JS</b> to feed back to regional managers about localised surveys.</p> <p><b>JS/JLL</b> to consider engagement around explaining the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) questions as routine.</p>

		<p>court newsletters, which is written by the relevant head of service. This is with the plan to make the newsletter more relevant and topical.</p> <p><b>Update:</b> Whatsapp broadcasting is being piloted with a small number of schemes from July, with the aim of for getting updates and messages out to residents.</p> <p><b>Update:</b> Results of the Resident Survey have been analysed and there are some core themes including Value for Money, service charges not being clear and how/when/who we communicate with/to.</p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents need the questions explained to them. There is evidence that when this happens, the feedback is better.</li> <li>• Some schemes are choosing to complete their own quarterly surveys so progress can be monitored.</li> <li>• Some residents get confused when their care provider isn't Housing 21 – it can be hard to separate the services.</li> <li>• Actions taken needs to be fed back to residents as this will encourage future engagement.</li> </ul> <p>JS explained that the questions are set by the regulator and cannot be changed but confirmed that H21 can and will do more to explain to residents what is meant by them.</p>	
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<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Future Development of the Forum and Facebook</b></p>	<p><b>Chair</b> there is a general wish for the forum to continue and to grow. How can attendance be encouraged?</p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JS and chair to make a plan for contacting all formal Residents' Associations and ask that a representative attend the forum.</li> <li>• Following that step, all other schemes without Residents' Associations will be contacted to request the same.</li> <li>• The meetings should be made available to all residents so they can watch if they wish. Can this be done? Can an edited 'highlights' version be made available? Can the transcript be circulated?</li> <li>• Residents are often interested in what affects them and their scheme directly rather than wider H21 business.</li> </ul> <p>Chair requested that forum attendees engage with the Facebook page more fully.</p>	<p><b>JS</b> to explore how the forum can be shared with residents.</p> <p><b>JS/Chair</b> to circulate meeting minutes and establish how to make contact with Residents' Associations.</p> <p><b>Resident Attendees</b> to encourage engagement with Facebook.</p> <p><b>All</b> to remind neighbours and contacts how easy it is to use Teams if a smart device is available.</p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p>	<p>All in attendance agreed meeting minutes should be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting rather than waiting.</p>	<p><b>JS/Chair</b></p>

**Date of next meeting: 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**Time of next meeting: 14:00**



**A link to the June meeting will provided two weeks ahead of the scheduled date.**