

**Action plan for Audit Commission Short Notice Inspection recommendations relating to Circle 33 tenant services**

Recommendation	Actions already in place as result of 2008-09 Service Improvement Plan	Proposed further actions
<p>Improve performance on gas servicing to ensure all homes are serviced annually by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to raise the standard of contractor performance</li>   <li>• In conjunction with customers, review access arrangements to homes where this proves difficult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly and monthly contractor performance reviews</li> <li>• Monthly management reviews of performance trends</li> <li>• Payment to contractors linked to performance</li> <li>• Replaced both poorly performing contractors in the course of the year – involving residents in the process</li>   <li>• Dedicated staff member manages cases where contractor unable to achieve access</li> <li>• Use of information on tenant needs to ensure equal access to services</li> <li>• Promotion and awareness articles in Tenant Newsletters throughout the year about the importance of access for servicing</li> <li>• Action on feedback from Residents conference Nov 08, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Contacting residents 9</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate ways to ensure contractors take more responsibility for pursuing access (by Sept 09)</li>   <li>• Investigate potential of direct line to gas contractors for residents – which requires IT links with contractor (by Sept 09)</li>   <li>• Location of gas contractor representative in Circle 33 offices (from Sept 09)</li>   <li>• Investigate moving staff resources to create a single gas servicing team (by Sept 09)</li>   <li>• Investigate feasibility of amending IT system so repair order cannot be raised if gas servicing overdue and no appointment booked (by Sept 09)</li>   <li>• Promote importance of gas servicing and how to arrange appointment on website (from June 09)</li>   <li>• Consider costs/benefits of beginning access</li> </ul>

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	<p>weeks rather than 4 weeks ahead of the date the service is due giving greater opportunity for residents to make their own arrangements at their convenience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Offering weekend and evening appointments for gas servicing</li> <li>✓ Facility to contact contractors directly to arrange service appointments</li> <li>✓ Target times for completion of routine gas heating and hot water repairs reduced from 5 days to 3, with attendance within 24 hours where no heating or hot water</li> <li>✓ Provision of temporary heaters at the time of gas service</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident review of the gas related elements of the Service</li> </ul>	<p>process 12 weeks prior to when the gas certificate expires rather than current 9 weeks – by Sept 09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report back to those who attended resident conference on outcomes from workshop (April 09)</li> <li>• Implementation of records on gas database detailing reasons for delayed access on every case once access gained and access to database for all staff (September 09)</li> <li>• Publicise availability of evening and weekend appointments</li> <li>• Introduction of new procedures– including installation of gas limiters where access achieved on overdue cases, daily monitoring of contractor appointment schedules, dedicated line for engineers to report no access from site, evening joint inspections with contractor &amp; Circle 33 staff, additional briefings to staff, promoting gas safety awareness on the reverse of job confirmations (approved by Board March 2009)</li> </ul>

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	<p>Improvement Plan in Jan 09 found that the Improvement plan, it's objectives and priorities were clear, and reflected their priorities as customers, and two resident reps volunteered to sit on Service Improvement Group to monitor progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Gas busting' exercises carried out with volunteer staff jointly visiting tenants with overdue certificates with the contractor in the evenings and weekends</li> </ul>	
<p>Improve outcomes for the responsive repairs service by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the process for the service to ensure repairs completion times for urgent &amp; routine repairs are improved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of existing repairs operational arrangements to maximise performance, accuracy of diagnosis, management of complex repairs and telephone response times) in place from April</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target to reduce average job costs from £164 to £145 for 2009/10 whilst achieving increase in customer satisfaction to 88%. We will then set a target to achieve costs similar to that of the most efficient 25% of housing providers</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review contract arrangements and procedures to reduce the average cost of repairs compared to other similar organisations</li> <li>• In conjunction with customers review the out of hours reporting system and implement any resulting revisions</li> <li>• Ensure follow up actions for responsive repairs recorded on the IT system to allow improved tracking of repairs progress</li> <li>• In conjunction with customers introduce a policy to re-charge repairs that are the responsibility of the</li> </ul>	<p>2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplier discount arrangements negotiated</li> <li>• Sub contractor/direct labour ratio target set and monitored at monthly meetings</li> <li>• Performance related payment framework in place including Value for Money initiatives and monitored with contractor at monthly meetings</li> <li>• Direct access for operatives to repairs system through handheld computers introduced from June 08</li> <li>• Text message service for customers introduced April 08 to confirm appointment and request comment on completed repair, together with dedicated resource and systems to follow up any dissatisfaction highlighted through</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further improve reduce direct labour/sub contractor ratio (target 80/20 by end March 2010) to reduce costs</li> <li>• Incentive scheme to increase manual trades operative productivity (From Sept 09)</li> <li>• Cross contract working with Osborne partner clients in London to share and reduce costs (review feasibility by Sept 09)</li> <li>• New repairs team structure from April 09 to improve management of complex repairs and follow on works</li> <li>• Introduction of electronic link with sub contractors from April 09 to enable direct updating onto system of required follow on works</li> <li>• IT system changes to improve speed and accuracy of repairs diagnosis and structured technical training for call centre advisers from June 09</li> <li>• Groupwide review of re-charges with customers and implementation of policy (by Sept 09)</li> </ul>

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<p>tenant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and improve the systems for diagnosing complex repairs</li> </ul>	<p>Text service (or customers can call free phone contact centre number)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Out of Hours service review in progress – due to take proposals to tenants in June 09</li> </ul>
<p>Strengthen customer focus by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In conjunction with customers review &amp; establish measurable service standards for all services</li> <li>Review telephone answering service implementing any resulting changes to ensure a more responsive service for tenants</li> <li>Introduce robust quality assurance processes to ensure all responses to complaints and written communications on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance indicators to measure performance against existing service standards monitored through monthly performance management meeting</li> <li>Customer Care training for all staff developed in 2008 and being rolled out Feb to August 09</li> <li>Income management letters subject to consultation (Feb/March 09)</li> <li>Quarterly Mystery shopping measures performance against service standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groupwide Review of service standards scheduled for completion by Dec 09 – ensuring that outcomes from the regulator -Tenant Services Authority (TSA) ‘National Conversation’ and TSA standards are incorporated.</li> <li>New IT system scheduled for ‘go live’ autumn 2009 which will log and track all enquiries and enable reporting on performance against service standards for correspondence</li> <li>Circle 33 standards for call answering to be consulted on with residents and any changes implemented (by Sept 09)</li> <li>Letter writing training included in Learning &amp; Development Plan for 2009/10</li> </ul>

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<p>income management are customer focused</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In conjunction with customers review the need for a formal compensation policy for service failures</li> <li>• Set challenging targets to improve the level of tenant profile information for the six strands of diversity</li> <li>• In conjunction with customers, review the style and content of written communication on complaints and income management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer satisfaction and complaints reduction targets in place for all staff</li> <li>• Call answering targets included in repairs contractor performance payment framework</li> <li>• Calls quality checked by supervisors and used for coaching staff</li> <li>• Recruitment of 6 new permanent call centre staff in March 09</li> <li>• New, individual targets for each of the six key strands of diversity (age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality , language) set for 2009/10 - based on improving levels of data collected to date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment to include letter writing test from July 09</li> <li>• 10% of written complaint responses to be quality checked prior to issue from June 09 with targeting on those staff with weakest skills</li> <li>• Questback Complaints Customer feedback questionnaire to be amended to include satisfaction with quality of written response (June 09)</li> <li>• 10% of Income management letters to be quality checked prior to issue by Head of Income Management from April 09 with targeting on those staff with weakest skills</li> <li>• Compensation policy to be implemented and publicised to all residents by December 09 – in meantime basis for goodwill payments has been clarified for staff</li> </ul>