

Regenda Resident Scrutiny Panel

Review of cleaning, window cleaning and caretaking services

December 2017

1. Introduction

- a. The Resident Scrutiny Panel decided to carry out a review of cleaning and window cleaning given that Regenda had procured new contracts for these services. The Panel wanted to assess whether the contracts were delivering positive results for residents. The Panel decided to include caretaking services in the review as the caretakers also carry out some cleaning services.
- b. The review started in March 2017 and was completed during early December 2017. During this time, three new panel members joined and have contributed significantly to this review.

2. Scope

- a. Regarding cleaning and window cleaning, the review included the following lines of enquiry:
 - What is included in the contract (s) for this service.
 - The standards that have been set.
 - The costs and service charges relating to this service.
 - The quality of service provided – this will be tested by customer survey and by inspecting a sample of schemes that receive these services.
 - Monitoring arrangements.
- b. The Panel followed the following lines of enquiry relating to caretaking services:
 - Role description(s) for caretakers and areas where they operate.
 - Services provided, and charges made.

3. Activities Completed

- a. During the review, the Panel members completed the following activities:
 - Received presentations from officers who manage the cleaning and caretaking services.

- Reviewed information provided by officers, e.g. service charge data and information about cleaning and window cleaning specifications.
- Carried out scheme inspections to check the quality of cleaning and window cleaning. Checks completed by the Customer Inspectors were also taken into account. A list of schemes inspected by the Panel and Customer Inspectors is shown in Appendix A.
- In addition, Panel members checked scheme notice boards to find out what information about cleaning and window cleaning is available for residents.
- Completed a telephone survey, speaking to residents who live in the schemes the Panel had inspected. One of the Panel members has provided an analysis of the survey responses, and these can be found in Appendix B.
- Completed good practice research, including a visit to New Charter Group.
- Interviewed managers and shadowed caretakers.

b. The Panel's findings and recommendations are set out in detail below.

4. Strengths: Cleaning and Window Cleaning

a. Quality of service

- Panel members and Customer Inspectors identified good standards of cleanliness (communal areas and windows) at Portland Street, Brays Hay, Torentum and Main Drive.

b. Information for residents

- Cleaning and window cleaning specifications were displayed on scheme notice boards (identified at the schemes visited by Panel members). However, please see areas for improvement below – the Panel members identified some issues that need to be addressed.

c. Monitoring and performance

- Monthly monitoring meetings are held with cleaning and window cleaning contractors – however, please see areas for improvement below.
- Customer Inspectors are involved in carrying out scheme inspections that cover standards of cleaning and window cleaning.

- Regenda has developed a good *Communal Services Grading Guide* and estate inspection form. This is in the process of being implemented. These should be made available for residents, e.g. on Regenda's website and a summary should be displayed at schemes for those who do not have internet access
- Regular estate inspections are carried out by Housing Officers. Details of the day, time and meeting venue, along with the meeting place are publicised on Regenda's website. Feedback about action taken also displayed on the website. It would be good to see this information communicated via social media as well as the website.

5. Strengths: Caretaking Service

a. Role of the caretakers

- The role of the caretakers varies according to the needs of residents in the areas they cover. Any changes to their roles have been made in consultation with residents.
- One of the Panel members shadowed the caretaker who covers Lime Hurst Village; she was impressed with the variety of tasks undertaken, the size of the area covered, and she commented on the good standard of cleanliness at communal areas covered by the caretaker

b. Costs and service charges

- The caretakers have generated savings because of some of the work they carry out, e.g. key cutting and PAT tests. A saving of £59,000 was generated because of the caretakers carrying out jobs that would have cost more if outsourced or carried out by M&Y.

6. Areas for Improvement: Cleaning and Window Cleaning

a. Quality of service

- Panel members and Customer Inspectors identified examples of unsatisfactory cleaning and window cleaning standards across most of the schemes they visited. More details can be seen in Appendix B. Standards found were mixed.



• **Figure 1 Camelot Way**



Figure 2 Camelot Way

- The customer satisfaction survey revealed that residents are particularly dissatisfied with window cleaning services. One of the main comments made by residents was that they rarely saw their window cleaner. In some cases, residents said they pay other window cleaners to clean their windows; therefore, they are paying twice for the service.
- Residents commented that cleaning needs to be carried out more regularly to provide a better service.

b. Information for residents

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- The specifications do not include details such as the contractor's name or the date the specification was produced. The specifications

are standard and are not tailored to the services provided at each scheme.

- The Panel was informed that the new version had been displayed at schemes in Merseyside and would be rolled out across Cheshire, Manchester and Wyre soon. However, Panel checks at blocks in Merseyside (Camelot Way, St Peter's Court and Toftwood Gardens) revealed that the old version is still in place. In addition, the window cleaning specification is not displayed on notice boards at Torrentum Court and Freeborn House even though the residents receive this service.

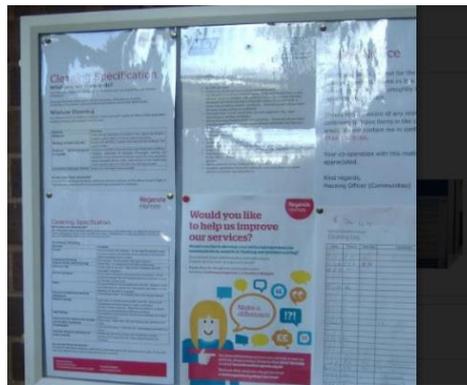


Figure 3 Camelot Way: old specification



Figure 4 Torrentum Court: no specification on notice board



Figure 5: Torrentum Court: no specification



Figure 6 Toftwood Gardens: old specification

- There is a couple of versions of the cleaning and window cleaning specification on Regenda's website – this is confusing. Please see list below.

[Communal cleaning specification for Merseyside.pdf](#)

[Draft Specification Communal Cleaning.pdf](#)

[Window Cleaning Draft Specification.pdf](#)

[Window cleaning spec.pdf](#)

c. Monitoring and performance

- There were no key performance measures for cleaning and window cleaning services.
- Contract monitoring meetings were supposed to take place fortnightly, but this was changed to monthly because there was insufficient feedback from housing officers and residents to justify more regular meetings. Given the issues the Panel identified regarding quality of cleaning and window cleaning, it appears that feedback from residents and housing officers is not getting through to the contract manager.
- The cleaning contractor's personnel complete cleaning schedule checklists and rate their own performance. This is not objective.
- One of the Panel members provided a copy of the cleaning monitoring sheet from his scheme (Camelot Way). This was only partially completed, entries were vague, so it was difficult to assess what the contractor's personnel had done and when.

- Regenda has produced a customer satisfaction survey for the cleaning, and window cleaning contracts and the Panel have provided their views. However, the contractor's personnel will be carrying out the survey; this may discourage residents from giving true opinions.
- The Panel was informed that residents can report cleaning and window cleaning problems on Regenda's website using an asset management email address. However, the Panel could not find this.

d. Costs and service charges

- 38% of the residents who responded to the Panel's survey did not know how much they paid for cleaning (or caretaking) and 44% thought that the service represents poor value for money.

7. Areas for Improvement: Caretaking Service

a. Role of the caretakers

- There is little information for residents about the role of the caretaker. This causes dissatisfaction as residents who pay for this service are not aware of what they are paying for. The Panel's survey revealed some uncertainty about the role of the caretakers.
- The only information the Panel found about caretakers was one article on Regenda's website about a new caretaker in Merseyside. This gave a good explanation of his role. However, his role differs to that of caretakers in other areas.

b. Costs and service charges

- The Panel was informed that small repairs carried out by the caretakers and any housing management functions they do are excluded from service charge calculations. However, it is not clear if this actually happens.

8. Recommendations

Recommendations	Expected benefit
<i>A. Cleaning and window cleaning</i>	
<p>A1. Implement a resident monitoring scheme for cleaning and window cleaning, whereby a resident at each scheme is asked to sign to say the cleaner and window cleaner has attended and completed their duties satisfactorily.</p> <p>At sheltered schemes, the scheme manager could do this.</p>	<p>Improved standards and tighter contract monitoring arrangements.</p>
<p>A2. Display the new grading system for the scheme and estate inspections on Regenda's website and publicise (a summary of) this information at each scheme.</p>	<p>Improved information for residents.</p>
<p>A3. Feedback the findings from inspections and the action taken to resolve issues. For example, display the information on scheme notice boards.</p>	<p>Better information for residents.</p>
<p>A4. Use social media to publicise scheme inspections and to feedback results</p>	<p>Engage more residents in inspections and keep residents informed.</p>
<p>A5. Revise the cleaning and window cleaning specifications, in consultation with the Scrutiny Panel, including more information about the services to be provided at each scheme, name of the contractor, contact details if there are any issues and the frequency of services.</p> <p>Ensure this information is displayed at all schemes that receive this information and on Regenda's website.</p>	<p>Better information for residents.</p>

Recommendations	Expected benefit
A6. Develop performance measures for the cleaning and window cleaning contracts and publish the results at schemes and on Regenda's website. Performance measures should at least include a) customer satisfaction levels and b) the grade awarded using the new inspection manual	More effective contract monitoring.
A7. Implement the customer survey for window cleaning and cleaning, using online and/or telephone surveys. Also, leave satisfaction cards at schemes so that residents can complete and return these to Regenda (via the Housing Officer or by post)	More effective contract management. Improve standards for residents by acting on their feedback.
A8. Set up a form on Regenda's website so that residents can report issues regarding the cleaning and window cleaning contracts.	More effective contract management. Improve standards for residents by acting on their feedback.
A9. Evaluate the costs and benefits of bringing the cleaning and window cleaning service in-house. New Charter Group has an in-house service that is well organised and is cost effective. They have 12 mobile caretakers working in teams of 3. The service carries out cleaning and some window cleaning. They have a very detailed description of all the activities carried out by their caretakers, along with timings and frequencies. This service also has the flexibility to provide additional, one off cleaning when schemes need it.	Improved customer satisfaction, performance and potentially lower costs.
A10. Involve tenants in the procurement of the new contract prior to commencement in April 2019	

Recommendations	Expected benefit
A11. Develop programme for customer inspectors and mystery shoppers to spot check / audit on site cleaning whilst in progress	
A12. Head of investment and service charge manager to attend scrutiny panel members to report progress , July October and February	
B. Caretakers	
B1. Provide information for residents about the role of the caretaker timetable of activities (for routine tasks). This information should be displayed on the website, at schemes, and sent to all residents who receive the service.	Better information for residents.
B2. Ensure that caretakers' costs are apportioned appropriately between rents and service charges so that residents are not paying twice for the service they receive.	Ensure that residents are being charged the correct amount for caretaking services.

9. Concluding remarks and learning points

- a. The Scrutiny Panel would like to thank all the officers and residents who supported them during this review.
- b. The Panel would also like to acknowledge the input from Stuart Shaw and Yvonne Chadwick who have now left the scrutiny panel.
- c. Officers are asked to provide an action plan responding to their recommendations. The Panel will monitor progress and in 12 months' time will evaluate the outcomes from this review.

Next Steps :

- Management response to be completed by 20th April
- Scrutiny Panel to present to executive team end of April
- Management response and deadlines to be presented to Scrutiny Panel in May

Appendix A: Scheme inspections

All scheme inspection carried out by the Scrutiny Panel were completed in June and early July 2017.

Scheme	Findings	Inspected by
Portland Street, Ashton	Good standards of cleanliness throughout.	Scrutiny Panel
Brays Hey	High standards of cleaning and window cleaning.	Customer Inspectors
Moor Lea, Ashton	Scrutiny Panel member found furniture left in the communal area; this was subsequently removed as housing officer had already placed an order to dispose of the items. Scrutiny Panel member found windows were smeared; however, customer inspectors also visited and found window cleaning to have been excellent, but the standard of communal cleaning was poor. Differences in findings due to the timing of the inspections?	Scrutiny Panel and Customer Inspectors
Freeborn House, Wyre	Poor standards of window cleaning.	Scrutiny Panel
Camelot Way, Merseyside	Poor standards of window cleaning and communal cleaning.	Scrutiny Panel
Well Lane, Devonshire Place, Boston Road, Calder Court and Morris Court. (Wirral)	Good standards of cleaning throughout.	Scrutiny Panel
Maritime Court, Wirral	Low standards of cleaning. Inspectors reported litter, cobwebs, door frames, window frames never cleaned. Also, standard of window cleaning poor.	Customer Inspectors.
Grassmere Court, Wirral	Bloodstain in communal area.	Customer Inspectors.

Appendix B: Analysis of customer survey

1. If you do know what they (cleaners, window cleaners and caretakers) are supposed to do, can you please give us a brief description of their main duties?



- Residents mostly know the duties of the services they receive. Some uncertainty as to what the caretakers' responsibilities are if they receive the service. 35% don't know if they have a caretaker and 31% are unsure.
- Largest emphasis was on window cleaning. Services vary in either never see or rarely seen to fortnightly to 6 six monthly to 3 times per year. Some pay privately because they do not attend regularly.
- Signing a job sheet or job description pinned to the notice board is useful, although not everyone reads these or receives them in a welcome pack.
- Overall 38% do not know how much they pay and 44% say it is poor value for money.

		<p>using technology to build trust.</p> <p>MB to implement with contractors</p>		
A2. Display the new grading system for the scheme and estate inspections on Regenda's website and publicise (a summary of) this information at each scheme.	Improved information for residents.	To be published via the Regenda website. Note - Not all schemes have notice boards and likely to be reviewing use of notice boards in terms of H & S Fire risk so unable to publicise at schemes	31/05/18	EM
A3. Feedback the findings from inspections and the action taken to resolve issues. For example, display the information on scheme notice boards.	Better information for residents.	Feedback from walkabouts and inspections already publicised via the Regenda website in each region. Feedback from Customer Inspectors also publicised on 'you said we did' Note - Not all	Completed no actions required	EM/DJ/JW

		schemes have notice boards and likely to be reviewing use of notice boards in terms of H & S Fire risk so unable to publicise at schemes		
A4. Use social media to publicise scheme inspections and to feedback results	Engage more residents in inspections and keep residents informed.	Feedback from walkabouts and inspections already publicised via the Regenda website in each region. Feedback from Customer Inspectors also publicised on 'you said we did'	Completed no actions required	EM/DJ/JW
A5. Revise the cleaning and window cleaning specifications, in consultation with the Scrutiny Panel, including more information about the services to be provided at each scheme, name of the contractor, contact details if there	Better information for residents.	This will be carried out in conjunction with neighbourhoods teams and scrutiny panel to understand where changes are required. In addition we can then build a	Ongoing task to be completed by the end of October – due to the far reaching influences that need to be	MB

<p>are any issues and the frequency of services.</p> <p>Ensure this information is displayed at all schemes that receive this information and on Regenda's website.</p>		<p>more robust monitoring system.</p> <p>Bronze/Silver/Gold packages–</p> <p>Consultation – go with majority and meet with schemes where there is no clear choice.</p> <p>-Piloting this concept for gardening services at Brunswick Mews presently</p> <p>Specs will have an impact on costs and this will be detailed within consultation. Work with comms to create a leaflet by end of May 2018</p> <p>New specs provided to HOCs for notice boards (Notice board</p>	<p>brought together.</p>	
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		audit to be carried out by JJ) Electronic audit form to be created for tablet		
A6. Develop performance measures for the cleaning and window cleaning contracts and publish the results at schemes and on Regenda's website. Performance measures should at least include a) customer satisfaction levels and b) the grade awarded using the new inspection manual	More effective contract monitoring.	More joined up approach form Regenda to monitor quality of services provided – visits to be in time with recent contractor attendance, electronic audit form – will look at linking to web so that customers can feedback on our inspection regime. JJ to attend all regions once per week to carry out inspections. Can meet with local teams but would be best to meet onsite to ensure she is able to get around as many sites as	Permanently ongoing. Agree to publish customer satisfaction results for the first time by 01/08/2018	MB

		<p>possible.</p> <p>Resident comments on new sign off sheet could be collated and published quarterly (may stop residents from getting involved though) – publish “you said we did”. Also use Regenda promises mystery shopping and tenant inspectors feedback build a larger pool of residents who can help us to improve.</p> <p>Customer Satisfacton – Star Survey</p>		
A7. Implement the customer survey for window cleaning and cleaning, using online and/or telephone surveys. Also, leave satisfaction cards at schemes so that residents can complete and return these to	More effective contract management. Improve standards for residents by acting on their feedback.	Work with comms to create postcards and build a questionnaire that captures data from customers which will be useful in	Build questionnaire by end of May and begin immediately.	MB

Regenda (via the Housing Officer or by post)		forming reasonable actions to drive service improvements. Garner responses through online, in person, telephone and postal surveys immediately		
A8. Set up a form on Regenda's website so that residents can report issues regarding the cleaning and window cleaning contracts.	More effective contract management. Improve standards for residents by acting on their feedback.	Work with IT and comms to get this set up and use the questionnaire and/or an issue reporting service.	30/06/2018	MB
A9. Evaluate the costs and benefits of bringing the cleaning and window cleaning service in-house. New Charter Group has an in-house service that is well organised and is cost effective. They have 12 mobile caretakers working in teams of 3. The service carries out cleaning and some window cleaning. They have a very detailed description of all the activities	Improved customer satisfaction, performance and potentially lower costs.	Review in time for tender and report back to exec team for them to determine best outcome.	Report to be carried out by 31/07/2018	MB

carried out by their caretakers, along with timings and frequencies. This service also has the flexibility to provide additional, one off cleaning when schemes need it.				
A10. Involve tenants in the procurement of the new contract prior to commencement in April 2019				MB
A11. Develop programme for customer inspectors and mystery shoppers to spot check / audit on site cleaning whilst in progress				AW
A12. Head of Investment and Service Charge Manager to attend scrutiny panel members to report progress , July October and February				MB
B. Caretakers				
B1. Provide information for residents about the role of the caretaker timetable of activities (for routine tasks). This information should be displayed on the website, at schemes, and sent to all residents who receive the service.	Better information for residents.	Not all schemes have notice boards and likely to be reviewing use of notice boards in terms of H & S Fire risk so unable to publicise at schemes. Each region to	31/05/18	EM/DJ/JW

		<p>provide information via Regenda website on regional caretaker role/ activity.</p> <p>Sign up packs for new residents to include caretaker details where applicable</p>		
<p>B2. Ensure that caretakers' costs are apportioned appropriately between rents and service charges so that residents are not paying twice for the service they receive</p>	<p>Ensure that residents are being charged the correct amount for caretaking services.</p>	<p>Lancashire environmental warden role does NOT include any repairs function so no amendment required.</p> <p>GMC regions caretakers funded differently but service charge amount charge to residents is correct and is not being charged twice</p>	<p>Completed no actions required</p>	<p>EM/DJ/JW</p>

		<p>3 Caretakers</p> <p>1 Caretaker fully funded by Regenda</p> <p>1 Caretaker partially funded by Regenda (17%)</p> <p>1 Caretaker fully paid by service charge</p> <p>Merseyside Caretakers are not serviced charged – solely Regenda funded</p>		
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