



West Region Virtual Open Forum: Question and Answers

Date: Wednesday 22 July 2020

Staff in attendance:

- Ludovic Basse, Regional Head of Housing (LB)
- Akima F. Bailey, Regional Head of Housing (AFB)
- Robert Manning, Contract Operations Manager (RM)
- Aneka Bogle, Leasehold Manager (AB)
- Patrick Lovett, Leasehold Manager (PL)
- Ollie Levy, Resident Involvement Manager (OL)

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lukOFnYg9I>

Questions and Answers:

	Question	Answer
1	When is NHG looking to be back to working at normal capacity in offices - this relates to housing officers?	Ludovic Basse: There are no current timescales for our offices to return to normal capacity or be open to the public. We have a project group that work with colleagues from different departments to assess the needs of operations and government guidelines to ensure safety of residents and staff is prioritised. None of our offices are currently open for the public. Our current working arrangements for staff is that our Kings Cross office is open for those who are struggling to work from home. The office has been set up with a reduced capacity to ensure social distancing and a booking system for staff to follow. Our office at Hammersmith is open for staff for 2 hours 2 days a week to allow a drop in while working in our communities under the same conditions.
2	Would it not be better for contractors to wear masks as standard and remove them upon a resident asking, rather than the other way round?	Robert Manning: Currently we are following government advice in regard to face covering within residents' properties. We are reviewing guidelines constantly and will adapt these when necessary. Currently we feel it is best that the resident has a choice, and the contractors should be asking the appropriate questions re COVID 19/ PPE and customer preference when booking the appointment. This is also being followed up at a local level when the operative attends.
3	What are the plans for cyclical works for Hounslow?	LB: We recognise that there have been delays to our cyclical work plans due to covid19. There is a limited programme with several homes planned for Hounslow for the remainder of 2019-20. Next year's programme is currently under review and residents will be contacted prior to surveys being completed to carry out stock assessments.

4	Is there a process in place for how PMOs liaise with contractors, and if so, where do we find it? We have had issues with our PMO and are trying to ascertain clarity.	Aneka Bogle: In terms of contacting a contractor this will be via email or phone. Once a repair is identified, the PMO will use our framework to contact the contractors and find out if they are able to provide a quote for the cost of works ensuring they achieve value for money.
5	What's the process for PMOs notifying residents that they are conducting a site visit? We are lucky to find out at all or if we bump into them whilst on the site.	AB: Residents are able to ask their PMO when they are next visiting their estate/block to join their PMOs on an estate inspection. We understand that as we are emerging from lockdown, many people may not feel comfortable with this idea. Prior to Covid19 we were encouraging our staff to conduct at least two joint estate inspections with their Leaseholders, their Housing Officer counterpart and any tenants. The process for this is for the PMO to write to the residents, advising of the date and time they will be carrying out an inspection ensuring they give sufficient notice and provide a meeting point (such as a site entrance or block entrance). They will then be able to walk through and highlight any issues or bring any relevant points to the PMOs attention so that they can take the necessary action.
6	Does cyclical mean you will be giving residents new bathrooms or kitchens? If so when will you be doing Hammersmith and Fulham?	RM: Cyclical works are repairs and maintenance to external and communal areas. This would be the structural elements of the building along with internal communal areas. We have a separate programme for kitchen and bathroom replacements. However, we replace kitchens and bathrooms based on condition rather than age, and these should be referred to our assets department by the housing officer to review and agree. This year's programme has been finalised and we are contacting residents on this year's programme now around the impact of Covid-19 on this plan.
7	It's been mentioned a while ago by a couple of you that vulnerable residents have been contacted by you to check up on them. Is this leaseholders only or does that go for ALL vulnerable residents as we have vulnerable residents at W5 but no one has been contacted by NHG.	Akima Fraser- Bailey: We have attempted to contact all tenants that are vulnerable and over 60s. This is for all residents in all tenures. We have also signposted tenants that required any assistance to the relevant services. We will follow up with the block mentioned here.
8	Have HOs started to visit properties after lockdown?	LB: We currently have Housing Officers visiting residents' homes for emergencies only. Where possible we use technology and have been carrying out annual visits over the phone and diagnosing repairs via video calls. If a Housing Officer does need to visit the internal area of a home, our staff are equipped with the relevant PPE and will observe social distancing.

9	What is the standard and/ or expected response by email?	AFB: Standard response times for emails is five working days. However, tenants can sign up to My account and self-serve.
10	Following repairs carried out in a property, will it be possible for residents to receive a copy of the report that is normally sent to the housing officer either added to their WorkWise account or sent by email.	RM: There are many improvements being made to WorkWise (our internal system) and residents' My account and repairs. I will check with housing officers as to what our residents can see when a job is completed.
11	Just to clarify: if you arrange a repair job for example over the phone with your HO, could you find out via My account how long the wait for the service to be carried out?	LB: 'My Account' is the online portal where residents can raise repairs, make payments, check their account and raise requests for their Housing Officer for contact. If a resident raises a repair this will show on the My account portal. The status will change in line with how the repair is progressing through being raised, to appointment and resolution. If Housing Officers raises the repair the information is shown within resident's account in the same way. Repairs have different targets for resolution depending on their priority. This ranges from 4 hours to 28 days for standard repairs. We recognise as we are emerging from lockdown that repairs will not always be completed within the timescale but will keep residents updated to progress.
12	How often will you hold these forum meetings?	Ollie Levy: The forums before lockdown were held twice a year in each area where they were running. Having done the first virtual forum in the west regions, we are committed to replicating this offer of a virtual forum for the three other regions. It is important that we maintain communication with residents as we continue to work remotely and will explore the frequency of this going forward. It will also be useful to consider when we are able to conduct meetings face to face how we can also use video technology as well.