

Meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee		2 July 2025
Author	Customer Scrutiny Panel	Decision

Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) scrutiny review report – Lettings and Voids

Reason for topic

This scrutiny review is part of the scrutiny programme 2024-25, which was formulated following consultation with colleagues and customers (including the Customer Scrutiny Panel). The programme was drafted following the review of data and evidence from a range of sources, including performance, customer perception survey measures, identified customer priorities and the list of previously agreed review topics and one of the topics highlighted for review was Lettings and Voids. The Customer Scrutiny Panel has also been advised, through performance data, that the lettings and voids periods are off target, and this is an underperforming Key Performance Indicator (KPI) area for Rooftop.

Recommendation:

That the Audit and Risk Committee approves the Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) scrutiny review report Lettings and Voids.

Objectives

- Review the current policy and associated procedures to ensure they are in line with best practice, and that they are being applied consistently.
- Review how Rooftop manages and cooperates with external stakeholders involved in the lettings and voids process, for example, local Councils.
- Review from the customer's perspective, how effective communications are between Rooftop and its customers in regard to lettings and voids.
- Review customer satisfaction with the communication provided by Rooftop to customers during the process.
- Review the effectiveness and suitability of the pre tenancy assessment process.
- Review the effectiveness and suitability of the void standard.
- To review if all customers are being treated fairly and equitably.
- Review the effectiveness and suitability of the differing processes for the tenure types and types of property.

Methods

- Desk top review of relevant data and documentation.
- Interview relevant colleagues.
- Shadow colleagues and contractors while working.
- Interview customers via telephone/online surveys, as to their degree of satisfaction with the service.
- Follow the customer journey through mirroring correspondence.
- Reviewing methods used by other organisations.

Desk top review

The desk top review will include the following elements:

- Monitor compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Performance information including customer satisfaction results.
- Relevant policies and procedures, including any covering reports leading to their adoption.

Review approach

With the assistance of Matthew Stratta, Business Analyst, we developed a Lettings and Voids survey which was conducted via telephone and digitally using CX Feedback, as well as conducted face to face. 138 survey invitations were sent out, with 68 completed for a response rate of 49%. With a confidence level of 95% and a 9% margin of error, we can be confident that the results from this survey are statistically valid, and that we can draw conclusions and make recommendations from them. Please see appendix 1 for further information.

Interviews

As part of the review, we interviewed Abbey Mountford (Void Repairs Coordinator); David Hall (Head of Lettings and Income Protection); Gary James (Head of Repairs and Maintenance) and Lucia Bennett (Lettings Manager).

We also interviewed a representative of Platform Property Care (PPC): Rob Wright (Voids Supervisor).

Policies and procedures

- Lettable Standard Procedure.
- Allocations and Lettings Policy.
- Void Works Management Policy.
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

The policies and procedures reviewed by the CSP during this scope were or are being updated to incorporate our feedback, ensuring they align with current best practices and regulatory requirements.

Findings

The Voids Repairs Coordinator was helpful with her insight into the current voids process. The Head of Repairs and Maintenance explained and clarified policies and procedures for our better understanding.

The Lettings Manager clarified and expanded upon the lettings process and changes that have been made recently, giving a more in-depth overview.

The representative of PPC provided a broad and insightful explanation of the voids process and their own standards.

Customer feedback

Lettings

Surveys demonstrated that a significant portion of customers were pleased with their experience moving into their new homes in comparison to their previous home. Respondents highlighted factors such as suitability and condition of the property, the lettings process, support provided, Rooftop colleagues and the pleasure of having their own homes as key contributors to their positive experience (see appendix 2).

How would you rate the whole experience compared with moving into your previous home?

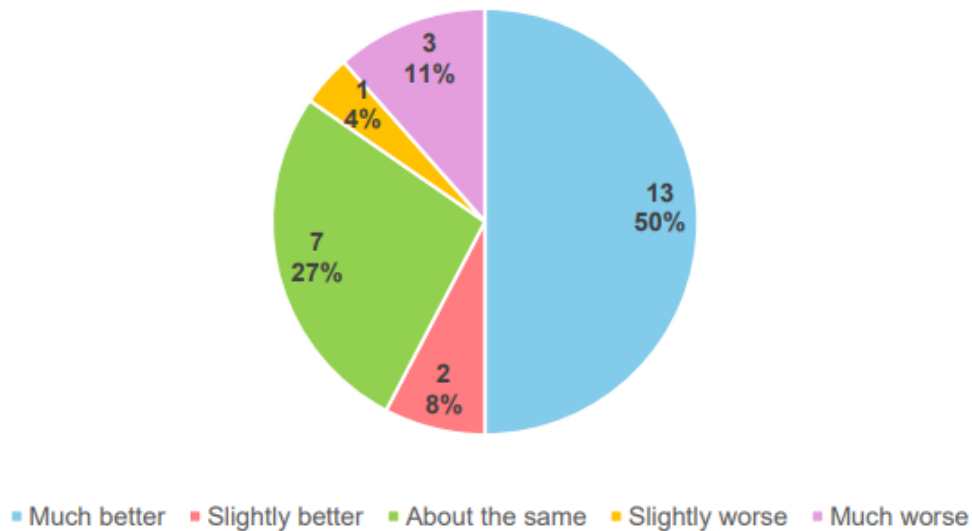


Figure 1

Voids

However, a portion of customers reported that there were outstanding issues when they moved into their properties. The most common outstanding issue was repairs, followed by garden maintenance, damp, mould and condensation (DMC), programmed works, cleaning, water pressure, safety checks and a lack of support from Rooftop colleagues (see appendix 2).

Upon asking respondents how Rooftop could have better supported them to resolve these issues, many preferred an open and honest approach regarding outstanding works as well as a better quality of void checks. Customers commented on the amount of time outstanding repairs took to complete, a lack of support and poor communication (see appendix 3).

Did anything still need to be done when you moved into your new home?

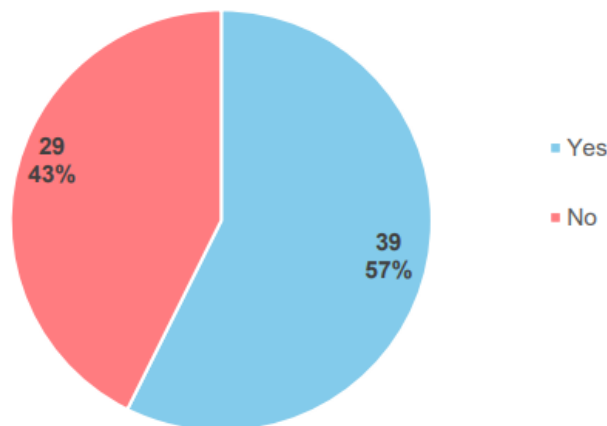


Figure 2

Customer comments

Respondents were asked open ended questions to allow for a deeper understanding of their feedback. Below are some examples that illustrate the trends found in their answers.

Issues that were outstanding when you moved in.

- “Window latches all needed replacing, windows blown. Electrics were left dangerous - all running on extension cables. None were completed upon exchange. Some issues still not resolved. Uncovered more issues.”
- “The cooker is still not working. The carpet has black marks. A wall had dirty marks and my Housing Officer recommended that I paint it myself.”
- “There are still ongoing issues which will not be resolved until the start of the next financial year, including replacement of the back door, some plastering work and levelling of the garden, to enable this resident to access his home freely.”
- “The garden was a terrible mess and still is. Resident is unable to do it herself and doesn't like to ask for help as she is grateful to have a home.”

How could Rooftop have better supported you to resolve issues?

- “A more detailed view of the property and better electrical check. The property we left had no issues, the one we moved into still has ongoing issues which are not resolved. More issues found which were covered up upon viewing the property. More detailed view of repairs which must be completed before moving in.”
- “By listening to residents.”
- “Get the repairs done, including roof repairs, especially as it was a safety hazard that the water from the roof was leaking onto an electrical circuit board.”
- “By allocating a property suitable for a disabled child, or at a minimum making the property safe for that purpose, i.e., the garden was full of very large rabbit holes and still is, so the lady's child has not been able to play outside since moving.”

Our recommendations

1. Many comments made by customers regarding outstanding issues were related to cleaning. One customer specifically noted that the property was 'very dirty and very unclean'. Therefore, we recommend that there is an official standard of cleaning set for not only general needs properties but also for sheltered schemes.
2. Customers should be made aware if previous customers in the home smoked cigarettes inside. While cleaning and redecoration may remove surface issues such as staining, potential damage may linger in vents, heating systems and porous surfaces like wooden doors. Customers should also be made aware if previous customers had pets, especially regarding allergies, as pet dander may linger after cleaning and redecoration.
3. New customers should be provided a list of items that are left in the property by previous customers (e.g. lightbulbs, curtain rails, furniture). While customers are made aware that properties are unfurnished upon letting, it should be clearly communicated when essential items such as lightbulbs have been removed from the property before they move in.
4. The "goodwill bonus" awarded to customers who have left their property in good condition upon termination needs to be stated clearly and advertised, not just at the pre-void stage. This could be advertised on the website and in the tenancy sign-up stage.
5. Disabled customers should be made aware of more support options for the move in stage. One customer commented that they felt overwhelmed when moving in with a lot of boxes. The Pre-Tenancy Assessment could include options of support to provide context. The relevant Neighbourhood Housing Officer should also check in with new customers during the moving process to ensure that the customer is not having any difficulties.
6. The tenancy termination checklist should be made accessible to customers before the termination stage. This could be provided on the Rooftop website as well as included in the lettings package to allow customers sufficient time to leave their home in a good standard upon moving out. Customers should be clearly informed of what would constitute a recharge and that Rooftop provides references for new tenancies.
7. New customers should be provided a list of repairs that need to be done at the void stage as well as after the tenancy begins to ensure honest and transparent communication and avoid customers being blindsided.
8. White goods in properties and schemes that are provided and maintained by Rooftop should have a standardised procedural check in place to ensure that they are in working order and adequately clean for new customers.
9. New and potential customers should be provided with a list of the documents required from them before the pre-tenancy stage. This could be included in the bidding stage and/or accessible on the Rooftop website. This would help shorten the void time as customers will have more time to gather any required documentation such as proof of identity, proof of income etc.

Methodology

Telephone, Digital and Face to Face surveys
using CX-Feedback (survey system)

Survey Population

Customers who moved into a newly let home between
March and November 2024, who had previously completed
a Lettings survey over the phone between April and December

Response Rate

Sent invites: **138** Completed surveys: **68**
Response rate: **49%**

Statistical Validity of Results

Confidence level: 95%
Margin of error: 9%

**We can be confident that the results from this survey are statistically
valid, and that we can draw conclusions and make recommendations
from them**

Gender of Respondents

Male: 24 **35%**
Female: 44 **65%**

Age Group

16-24: 4 **6%**
25-34: 15 **22%**
35-44: 9 **13%**
45-54: 8 **12%**
55-64: 14 **21%**
65-74: 12 **18%**
75+: 6 **9%**

Needs Category and Area

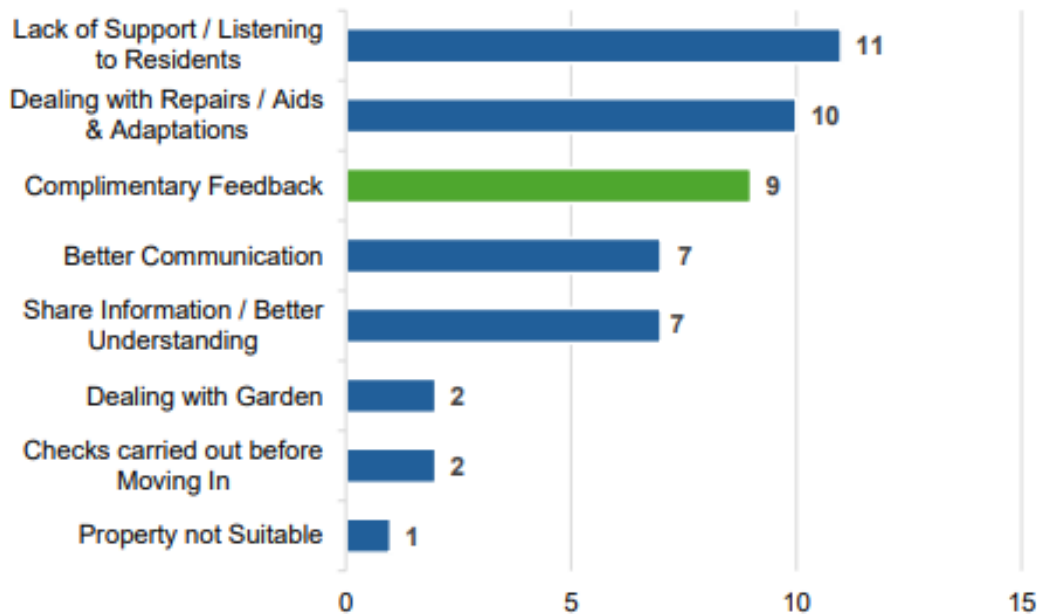
General Needs 54 **79%**

Evesham & villages: 21
Persore & villages: 20
Bishop's Cleeve: 4
Inkberrow: 4
Gloucester: 3
Kidderminster: 1
Ross on Wye: 1

OP Schemes 14 **21%**

Evesham: 8
Persore: 2
Broadway: 2
Gloucester: 2

How could Rooftop have better supported you to resolve issues?



What issues were outstanding when you moved in?

