



Tenant Voice Scrutiny Panel Report

Planned Repairs Communication

Report Agreed with Scrutiny Panel: 29 March 2023

Ahead of being published, minor changes made to formatting and grammar/spelling, correct job titles, ahead of being published.

Post scrutiny note from Berneslai Homes (July 2024):

Scrutiny reports are usually shared with EMT and Customer Services Committee and a formal response from them shared with the Scrutiny Panel. This process was not followed on this scrutiny project as it became a collaborative project between Berneslai Homes and tenants, which was managed as a task and finish group. The agreed recommendations from the scrutiny project were implemented immediately.

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1: About the Report

The report aims to share the findings of the Scrutiny Panel and their assessment of how we communicate with customers awaiting planned repairs to be carried out at their property.

The report will also include the recommendations from the panel in relation to their findings.

The report was compiled by the Community engagement Officer on behalf of the Teant Scrutiny Panel.

2: Why we chose the project

During the last scrutiny report (2022 Damp and Mould repairs) one of the main issues consistently raised and discussed was communication across the board regarding repairs. The panel highlighted this as a separate topic for scrutiny to assess in the future. Decision was made by the panel for their next scrutiny topic to focus on 'Planned repairs communication'.

3: How tenants were involved in overall assessment of the process

Our Scrutiny panel members were involved in meetings throughout the process. We held 6 meetings attended by 6 scrutiny panel members at each individual meeting.

They gave 17.5hrs of their time supporting the process.

We used valuable customer insight to inform their conclusion and recommendations.

Their recommendations were considered and 9 out of 11 were implemented immediately in the suite of letters used to keep tenants informed of progress with planned repairs.

4: Scrutiny Timeline & record of meeting outcomes

Date	Meeting	Outcome from meetings
Dec 22	Panel discussed the next scrutiny panel topic; 'Planned repairs communication'.	<p>Topic agreed. 1st meeting booked for Mon 12/12/22.</p> <p>Request made for Head of Repairs, Maintenance and Building Safety to attend and share copies of up-to-date versions of letters sent to tenants awaiting planned repairs.</p>
12/12/22	<p>Head of Repairs, Maintenance and Building Safety shared with the panel the current letter regarding the waiting list for programmed replacement or planned repairs. Updated the Panel regarding the current process being followed regarding communication for programmed replacement and planned repairs.</p> <p>Also shared information regarding a new post within their team.</p> <p>New role: Repairs and Maintenance Customer Support officer. Recruiting to post asap, 12-month temp position.</p>	<p>See Appendix 1</p> <p>The new role demonstrates that Berneslai Homes are keen to implement resources to address customer and organisational issues regarding planned repairs and communication.</p> <p>Request attendance from Senior Maintenance Surveyor / Domestic Energy Assessor and the Maintenance Manager.</p> <p>Initial suggestion for the letter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalise the letter • Categorise the repair

	<p>Panel requested a presentation at the next meeting of the timeline of communication from 1st reporting a repairs job. (Including contract partner information)</p> <p>The draft letter shared with the panel by Head of Repairs, Maintenance and Building Safety is ready to be sent to customers awaiting an equipment and adaptation repair.</p> <p>Target audience for receiving this letter is 160+ customers. Panel discussed the idea of sending this letter asap so that we would have a small pool of tenants that we could communicate with through a questionnaire. Ask for their opinions regarding their experience of planned repairs communication. This information could be useful when moving forward with the rest of this panel project.</p>	<p>Design survey with panel to send out to all tenants on the E&A list that will receive this letter to gain customer feedback to assist the next scrutiny topic. Community Engagement Officer to facilitate.</p>
<p>11/01/23</p>	<p>Senior Maintenance Surveyor / Domestic Energy Assessor and the Maintenance Manager attended the meeting.</p> <p>Officers explained in detail Berneslai Homes '<i>normal</i>' offer in terms of planned repair. e.g. reporting a repair, it is becoming logged in the system reporting, repair works released, and communication received throughout.</p> <p>Officers then explained the '<i>current</i>' and what is affecting</p>	<p>Helped panel members gain a better understanding of previous issues identified and raised by customers regarding planned repairs communication and some of the of going work being completed by the Service improvement co-ordinator</p> <p>See Appendix 2</p> <p>Panel would like the Service Improvement Officer to attend a future meeting to discuss this document in more detail. Opportunity to explain ongoing efforts to improve communication for planned repairs.</p> <p>TBC</p>

	<p>timescales, delays etc. They also explained the efforts being made to tackle some of the issues that customers are facing.</p> <p>Shared a journey map example document with the panel provided by the Service improvement co-ordinator, focusing on a planned repair.</p>	
<p>25/01/23</p>	<p>Customer Services Manager shared a report with the panel showing complaints received for the last 12 months re: Communication for planned repairs.</p> <p>Discussed the idea of a booklet / leaflet, designed in- house. The booklet would explain in an easy way the journey of a planned repair from logging through to completion. Could this be done in house?</p> <p>After further discussions they agreed that the only way to achieve this and meet their aims and outcomes is to see all planned works letters. E.g. 'Master' planned repairs letter and the letters issued by Construction services and Wates once jobs are being released.</p>	<p>See Appendix 3</p> <p>Panel invited Customer services manager to attend future scrutiny panel meeting to explain findings in more detail. TBC</p> <p>Senior Maintenance Surveyor/ Domestic Energy Assessor to look at the feasibility of this idea. Cost of printing / shelf life of a booklet is this good Value for money?</p> <p>Due to the continual changes with timescales / materials etc could we make the offer of updating the website. New info, imagery, flowchart, contact details etc designed in house by Graphics and Creative design officer. The offer to tenants could be that the information is available on the website but if customers request hard copies we would provide.</p> <p>Community Engagement Officer to chase up the draft copies of all planned repairs letters including those sent from Construction services and Wates.</p>

<p>08/02/23</p>	<p>Panel looked at the current letters in draft form for any works on Hold planned. (Construction services and wates)</p> <p>Construction services programmed planned replacement letter</p> <p>Construction services planned repairs letter</p> <p>Wates planned repairs letter</p> <p>Wates programmed replacements letter</p>	<p>Recommendations from Scrutiny included in letters attached to appendix 4 > 8</p> <p>Appendix 4 + Action Plan</p> <p>Appendix 5 + Action Plan</p> <p>Appendix 6 + Action Plan</p> <p>Appendix 7 + Action Plan</p> <p>Appendix 8 + Action Plan</p> <p>Community Engagement Officer to share recommendations for all letters from panel with Maintenance Manager asap.</p> <p>Community engagement officer to share amended letters with panel. Date TBC.</p>
<p>20/02/23</p>	<p>Community Engagement Officer met with Maintenance Manager to discuss the proposed recommendations for all letters regarding planned repairs.</p>	<p>All recommendations for each letter as discussed at the last meeting are listed in the report's Action Plan.</p>
<p>22/02/23</p>	<p>Community Engagement Officer fed back outcome of meeting with Maintenance Manager regarding recommendations for planned repairs letters.</p> <p>The Panel were keen for clarity on a job/tenant reference number being included on each individual letter. Community Engagement</p>	<p>Community Engagement Officer to include this in recommendations when</p>

	<p>officer discussed this within the meeting as the Customer Services Manager Agreed that this should be an option as other teams within BH provide similar info within customer letters e.g. Lettings/Homeseeker do include an individual ID number/code.</p> <p>Customer Services Manager delivered a presentation regarding complaints received over a specific timeline regarding complaint associated with planned repairs communication</p> <p>Service Improvement Co-ordinator delivered a presentation regarding service improvements relating to 'Planned repairs communication' and the ongoing work. Paying reference to customer journey map.</p> <p>Community Engagement Officer addressed the panel and asked if they were happy with the collation of all information received regarding the planned repairs communication letters and happy for the report to be compiled and presented in draft form once complete?</p>	<p>meeting with Performance and Business Development Manager.</p> <p>Queries from panel addressed regarding the information presented. Script for contact centre discussed. Explained what the contact centre currently does if a call comes through regarding a 'planned repair'</p> <p>Appendix 5</p> <p>Process of service improvements explained to the panel and how this is currently implemented within the organisation.</p> <p>Panel agreed for this scrutiny panel 'Planned repairs and communication report to be compiled and draft shared with the panel ASAP. All panel members agreed to this. Next meeting for the panel would be called once report complete. Deadline March 23. Updates to the panel regarding progress would be shared to all panel members via e-mail.</p>
<p>March 23</p>	<p>Community Engagement Officer met with Performance and Business Development Manager to discuss meeting with Repairs and Maintenance Manager and sign off and agree all recommendations</p>	<p>These options were discussed with the Performance and Business Development Manager and agreed the recommendations are all shared in the Action Plan.</p>

29/03/23	Met with panel to share full report draft.	Panel made recommendations for reducing the size of the report regarding relevant content etc. Some of the information from the left-hand column in the timeline could become the minutes of the meeting for evidence if requested and this would be a record of what specifically happened in meetings. Community Engagement Officer agreed that this was good practice for moving forward for other scrutiny projects.
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5. Summary of findings

Recommendations for Planned Repairs letters

11 recommendations were identified by the panel to be implemented across all x5 planned repairs communication letters and the development of a new information booklet The action plan highlights all recommendations and Berneslai Homes response. Berneslai Homes responded to these recommendations and actioned '9 out of 11' and explained why they did not feel it appropriate to action the 'other 2'. (see action plan)

Additional outcomes:

Scrutiny Panel were keen to record some additional outcomes from the meetings held which were not directly relevant to planned repairs but they felt beneficial to Berneslai Homes' future practice on repairs.

1. Booklet

They noted limited tenant facing resource/document is available that explains the process of reporting a repair and the comms and timescales regarding a customer waiting for a planned repair.

Update July 2024 – This is being progressed in the new tenant information pack.

2. 'Lived experience' for future scrutiny panel topics

To introduce and develop the 'lived experience' of tenants to include in future scrutiny projects.

3. Scrutiny panel action plan

As good practice we require a new Scrutiny panel action plan for 2023 and moving forward.

6. Action plan - recommendations

Panel's recommendations for improvement to the following x5 letters regarding Planned Repairs Communication.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master letter – Planned repairs • Construction services – Programmed replacements letter • Construction Services- Planned repairs letter • Wates – Planned repairs letter • Wates – Programmed replacements letter 		
Observation	Recommendation for improvement	Berneslai Homes Response
Frequency of the letters being delivered to tenants awaiting a repair	This letter should be sent out monthly	Rejected This would not be reflective of the timescale of some repairs. We would have to change completion dates for every letter for every job did not complete every time letters were sent out every month. The x3 month post out for planned repairs allows customers to enquire regarding their specific repair.
Letter does not include the type of the repair in the letter	Each letter should be personalised to the tenant/address and include a brief explanation of what repair they are waiting for	Agreed. For all planned repairs. Cannot be done for Equipment & adaptation letters as these are not entered on to SAP and therefore don't have a job number.
E-mail inbox address is very long	Liaise with BMBC, Reduce the size of the inbox address	Agreed. Will liaise with BMBC IT to have smaller inbox addresses created to fit within the font size of the

		letter and that are more customer friendly.
QR code to direct customers to repairs inbox	For the QR code to take customers straight to the page of our website related to reporting repairs etc	Agreed This QR code will remain in the letter. This QR code is included in all corporate letters. It is included to encourage customers to register for My Housing Online and update your contact details and preferences.
Mobile numbers should not be included in letters, good practice from BMBC	To remove all mobile phone contact numbers from BH planned repairs letters.	Agreed Do not include individual officers mobile contact numbers of letters so agree that all mobile contacts should be removed from customers letters.
No job reference numbers on the letters	To include customer's job reference numbers on all letters regarding BH planned repairs	Agreed Including job reference numbers on planned repairs letters will speed up customer enquiries and communication regarding their repairs in the future.
Is the landline number on the letter staffed?	This number should be part of a hunt group so that it doesn't go unanswered if a customer calls.	Agreed Landline numbers on all planned repairs communication letters ring on 'hunt group'. So, all enquires via telephone to 01226 numbers will be picked up. Unless outside the times stipulated on the letters.
Last sentence in the first paragraph is too much information/not needed	Remove last sentence from 1 st paragraph	Agreed BH Officers agreed and believe the letter is more customer friendly with this sentence removed.

Not in the recognised common font or font size	Letter to be in Arial 12	Agreed. Standard request, easy to meet.
No explanation within the letter as to when the contact number is available	Include a disclaimer in the letter regarding when the phone line is available	Agreed. Good suggestion. Improves the customer communication experience if it is clear when we will staff contact numbers that they may use regarding their repair.
Don't like the sentence with the apology in it. (Wates planned repairs letter)	Remove this sentence	Agreed Sentence removed

Further observations from panel regarding 'Planned repairs communication'

Observation	Recommendation for improvement	Berneslai Homes response
Berneslai Homes need to design a booklet that clearly outlines the journey of a repair and customer comms offer we provide during this process	The booklet needs to be in an easy-to-read format. The resource cannot just be a digital offer.	We will look at the feasibility of producing a printed copy and we need to make customers aware of the information on the new website. Update July 2024 <i>This has been included in the new tenant information pack which is currently being designed for print.</i>

APPENDIX 1- Suggested panel changes in red

My Ref:	E&A/JH/LD	Direct Dial:	01226 772785	Date:	(date)
Enquiries to:	Performance & Business Development	Email:	PerformanceandBusinessDevelopmentSupportTeam@berneslaihomes.co.uk		

Dear {name}

I am sorry that we have not yet completed the (work description) which we approved on (agreed date).

This delay is due to changes in how we now prioritise the completion of routine repairs, improvements, and adaptations. This change was essential to enable us to respond more quickly to emergency and urgent repairs. Sentence removed

We have reviewed our programme and we now expect your work to be started by (estimated start date, based on historical performance). This estimated start date takes into account how long you have been waiting, our legal obligation to complete the work and any risk to you of not completing the work sooner.

If your circumstances have changed since we agreed to do these adaptations, then please contact us so that we can review whether we need to start the work sooner. Please note that we will only bring work forward if there is an increased and high-level risk as a result of the adaptation not being completed.

We know this is disappointing and we are sorry for the inconvenience this may cause.

Yours sincerely

Repairs & Maintenance Team

Berneslai Homes

Visit www.berneslaihomes.co.uk or scan the QR code to register for My Housing Online and update your contact details and preferences.



APPENDIX 2 – Journey map for a planned repair

Please note hard copies of this document available on request. Please e-mail communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk

APPENDIX 3: Complaints performance report

Please note hard copies of this document available on request. Please e-mail communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk

Appendix 4 – Letter to be written in font 12 arial

My Ref:	E&A/JH/LD	Direct Dial:	01226 772785 Hunt Group	Date:	Job Number?
Enquiries to:	Performance & Business Development	Email:	Include new reduced size inbox address?		

Dear {name}

I am sorry that we have not yet completed the (**work description**) which we approved on (**agreed date**).

This delay is due to changes in how we now prioritise the completion of routine repairs, improvements, and adaptations. This change was essential to enable us to respond more quickly to emergency and urgent repairs and also make efficiencies.

We have reviewed our programme and we now expect your work to be started by (**estimated start date, based on historical performance**). This estimated start date takes into account how long you have been waiting, our legal obligation to complete the work and any risk to you of not completing the work sooner.

If your circumstances have changed since we agreed to do these adaptations then please contact us so that we can review whether we need to start the work sooner. Please note that we will only bring work forward if there is an increased and high-level risk as a result of the adaptation not being completed.

We know this is disappointing and we are sorry for the inconvenience this may cause.

Please note the contact number listed in this letter will be staffed from 08:45 am to 5pm, Mon to Thurs. 08:45 to 16:30pm, Fridays. (Excludes Bank Holidays)

Yours sincerely

Repairs & Maintenance Team

Berneslai Homes



Visit www.berneslaihomes.co.uk or scan the QR code to register for My Housing Online and update your contact details and preferences.

APPENDIX 5

****Letter to be written in arial 12****



Creating great homes and communities for the people of Barnsley.

www.berneslaihomes.co.uk

Chief Executive, Amanda Garrard,
Berneslai Homes, P.O.Box 627, Barnsley S70 9FZ.

Name

Address

My Ref:		Direct:	01226 773748	Date:	
			Hunt Group?		
Enquiries to:	Berneslai Homes Construction Services	Email:	include new reduced sized inbox address		Include Job number?

Dear

I am pleased to inform you that replacement works detailed below has been ordered with our contractor, Construction Services:

- ***(Insert description of work)***

Construction Services will contact you to arrange access to your home to take detailed measurements or assess exactly what work is required (they may have already been in touch). They will then advise you when the works will be carried out.

Our contractors are allowed 10 weeks to complete programmed replacement works, however most do not take this long. Construction Services will complete the work by ***(insert end date of orders)*** at the latest.

Enquiries relating to this work should be made directly to Construction Services on telephone number 01226 773748. **Please note the contact number listed in this letter will be staffed from 08:45 am to 5pm, Mon to Thurs. 08:45 to 16:30pm, Fridays. (Excludes Bank Holidays)**

Yours sincerely

Kevin Bowkett

Kevin Bowkett
Maintenance Manager



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www.barneslaihomes.co.uk

Chief Executive, Amanda Garrard,
Barneslai Homes, P.O.Box 627, Barnsley S70 9FZ.

Appendix 6

****Letter to be written in arial 12****

Name/Address

My Ref:	<i>(Insert Order No.)</i>	Direct Dial:	01226 773748 Hunt Group	Date:	Job Number:
Enquiries to:	Construction Services	Email:	include new reduced sized inbox address		

Dear

I am pleased to inform you that the planned repair work detailed below has been ordered with our contractor, Construction Services:

- ***(Insert description of work)***

Construction Services will contact you to arrange access to your home to take detailed measurements or assess exactly what work is required (they may have already been in touch). They will then advise you when the works will be carried out.

Our contractors are allowed 10 weeks to complete planned repair works, however, most do not take this long. Construction Services will complete the work by ***(insert end date of orders)*** at the latest.

Enquiries relating to this work should be made directly to Construction Services on telephone number 01226 773748. **Please note the contact number listed in this letter will be staffed from 08:45 am to 5pm, Mon to Thurs. 08:45 to 16:30pm, Fridays. (Excludes Bank Holidays)**

Yours sincerely

Kevin Bowkett

Kevin Bowkett
Maintenance Manager

Appendix 7 - **Letter to be written in arial 12**

Name

Address

My Ref:		Direct Dial: 01226 970918 Hunt Group	Date:	Job Number?
Enquiries to:	Wates	Email: include new reduced sized inbox address		

Dear

I am pleased to inform you that the planned repair work detailed below has been ordered with our contractor, Wates:

- ***Insert works here***

Wates will contact you to arrange access to your home to take detailed measurements or assess exactly what work is required (they may have already been in touch). They will then advise you when the works will be carried out.

Our contractors are allowed 10 weeks to complete planned repair works, however, most do not take this long. Wates will complete the work by ***insert date here*** at the latest.

Enquiries relating to this work should be made directly to Wates on telephone number 01226 970918. If the work has already been arranged/started, then please disregard this letter. **Please note the contact number listed in this letter will be staffed from 08:45 am to 5pm, Mon to Thurs. 08:45 to 16:30pm, Fridays. (Excludes Bank Holidays)**

Yours sincerely

Kevin Bowkett

Kevin Bowkett
Maintenance Manager



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www.berneslaihomes.co.uk

Chief Executive, Amanda Garrard,
Berneslai Homes, P.O.Box 627, Barnsley S70 9FZ.

Appendix 8 - **Letter to be written arial 12**

Name

Address

My Ref:	Direct Dial: 01226 970918 Hunt group	Date:	Job Number?
Enquiries to:	Wates	Email: include new reduced sized inbox address	

Dear (Name)

I am pleased to inform you that replacement works detailed below has been ordered with our contractor, Wates:

- (Works description)

Wates will contact you to arrange access to your home to take detailed measurements or assess exactly what work is required (they may already have been in touch). They will then advise you when the works will be carried out.

Our contractors are allowed 10 weeks to complete programmed replacement works, however most do not take this long. Wates will complete the work by (Order end date).

Enquiries relating to this work should be made directly to Wates on telephone number 01226 970918. **Please note the contact number listed in this letter will be staffed from 08:45 am to 5pm, Mon to Thurs. 08:45 to 16:30pm, Fridays. (Excludes Bank Holidays)**

Yours sincerely

Kevin Bowkett

Kevin Bowkett
Maintenance Manager