South Region

Resident Scrutiny Committee

2023/2024 Highlight Report

CLARION HOUSING

Scrutiny topic: Clarion's Aids and Adaptations service

What is a resident scrutiny committee?

- A resident scrutiny committee (RSC) is a group of residents who review housing services to ensure they meet residents' needs.
- This helps identify areas for improvement, ensures transparency and supports regulatory standards. The RSC's input builds trust, improves communication, and enhances the quality of Clarion's services.

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1. Why this topic was chosen

To see whether Clarion's current service is inclusive, accessible and smooth running.

The RSC also wanted to find out:

- if applications for aids and adaptations can be fast tracked in certain cases, such as if a terminal illness has been diagnosed.
- if an Occupational Therapist's assessment should always be required.
- how the Contact Centre handle enquiries and how they work with the Aids and Adaptations Team.
- if teams are resourced adequately enough in terms of staffing and IT.
- if communications could be improved.

3. How we did it?

Evidence gathering activities were carried out including:

- The Property Services Support Manager, responsible for Aids and Adaptations, joined the RSC to explain the legal background, Clarion's policies and procedures, team operations and relationships with local authorities.
- A desktop peer review compared Clarion's A&A service with other housing associations nationally.
- The Contact Centre Manager and Repairs Team Leader gave a presentation of their roles in the A&A process.
- Surveys were conducted with recent users of the service and Clarion Voice Email members to gather feedback and views.

To find out more about this report, or if you're interested in becoming a member, please email **getinvolved@myclarionhousing.com**

2. What we found out?

- A small team of five Property Services Support Officers, handle around 23,000 Aids and Adaptations (A&A) enquiries annually, mostly for new applications, with bathing adaptations being the most common request.
- The team operate nationally, working closely with 176 local authorities, each with unique procedures. They review and prioritise applications, especially urgent cases involving life-limiting illnesses, based on Occupational Therapist (OT) assessments.
- Enquiries are managed outside our internal CRM system, relying on the team's expertise and a system administrator. A planned transition to the CRM system has been delayed due to cost and resource issues.
- The Contact Centre is building expertise in A&A, with designated staff accessing the A&A system to better handle enquiries.
- Information for residents is available online and was found to be generally accessible. However, improvements could include simplifying language, adding explanatory videos or infographics, providing a list of available adaptations, and including aftercare guidance for repairs or warranties.
- The team's heavy workload and reliance on their experience, risk delays if caseloads increase without added staffing, IT upgrades, or streamlined processes, such as skipping OT assessments for minor adaptations handled by the Repairs Team.
- The need for A&A often signals declining health or mobility, which can affect residents' financial, social and mental wellbeing. Currently, no routine support is offered for these broader needs, such as money advice, employment support, or reducing social isolation.

4. What changed

- A review of the A&A process was carried out in April and May 2024.
- An options paper and presentation were shared with sponsors, including recommendations for improvement.
- Progress is on hold due to ongoing consultation of the Operating Model with Directors and Heads of Service in Customer & Property teams.
- Once these details are finalised, work on the recommendations will resume.