



Can Principal Contractors and Registered Providers learn from each other on Defects and Repairs?

For many Housebuilders working in Partnership with a Registered Provider on affordable new homes can be a daunting prospect. This relationship between two very different organisations with different cultures and values will have a much greater chance of flourishing if both parties embrace the real ethos of partnering.



Sir Michael Anthony Latham.

“Partnering includes the concepts of teamwork between supplier and client, and of total continuous improvement. It requires openness between the parties, ready acceptance of new ideas, trust and perceived mutual benefit” Latham Report (Para 6.45, p. 62)

When it comes to handing over your new homes to your trusted partner and handling defects and repairs, you don’t want all your teams hard work to unravel because of a rushed or ill prepared handover.

Plan early:

Communication between the Principal Contractor and the Registered Provider (RP) needs to be excellent. Provide accurate and advance notice to the RP’s development team of the agreed handover dates for respective properties.

Allow ample time for your team to pull together all the information and training required for both the RP’s development team and the tenant on handover.

Arrange a pre-handover meeting to run through your plans for the handover day and ensure that all parties are 100% happy with this approach.

Keep it simple:

Ensure that Defect and Repair descriptions are clearly outlined to all parties involved prior to the handover.

Comprehensive handover packs...



1. A simplistic approach is that the Principal Contractor should do everything including general repairs and maintenance for the agreed defects period, and the responsibility will pass over to the Registered Providers team after End of Warranty usually 12 months (but can be 24 months).

2. Provide a document to explain in simple language what qualifies as a defect or repair so both parties are fully aware who is responsible when the resident

reports an issue to the RP Customer Service team.

3. Principal Contractors and Registered Providers should agree what is expected of each party for the handling of defects during the warranty period prior to the 1st unit handing over. These Procedures for pre-handover and handover need to be written into the employer's requirements and the contract.

4. Principal Contractors and Registered Providers should agree home maintenance and whose responsibility it is to carry out these tasks (e.g. approach to topping up boilers etc.). If these details are not agreed prior to handover, it can lead to Registered Providers being charged for unnecessary call outs.

5. Registered Providers should aim to agree on consistent Respond and Repair time-scales for all schemes with all Principal Contractors in their region – residents can be confused as to why the response might be 24 hours on their property, but 4 hours on a friend's property up the street.

6. KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) for defects response times should be linked to customer satisfaction and exit surveys. They should be monitored and reviewed regularly. A comprehensive report should highlight recurring defects, and poorly performing Sub-Contractors for both the Principal Contractor and the RP's.

Empower the tenants:

Providing new residents with simple interactive training on how to use the new technology in the home will minimise reported defects and repairs.

1. These short training sessions can be an invaluable tool to ensure that the new residents have the skills required to understand how some of the more complicated features in their new home functions.

2. A train the trainer approach can be valuable for a revisit as moving in day can often be a frenetic and stressful experience.

3. Home User Guides should be simple, written in plain language (with diagrams where possible), explaining how, for example, the central heating boiler works. Show residents how to operate controls – and repeat if necessary. For example, on the use of flow restrictors and go through the new home user manuals, to avoid residents reporting issues which are not a genuine defect.

Education and involvement.

Educate the Registered Provider management teams on how the components in the new building work – give them the knowledge to train/remind residents at tenancy visits.

1. Involve members of the Registered Provider's own development team or their own direct labour organisation (DLO) operatives in training sessions on-site on how the components in the new home operate.

2. Staff should be given easy access to health and safety and operations and maintenance information.

3. Provide briefings for Registered Providers development staff, DLO operatives and call centre staff about the operation of heating and other systems, so that they can advise residents in real time about how they operate the controls on the central heating boiler, for example.