

Customer Improvement Panel

Monday 27th October 2025

Minutes of Meeting

Attendance:

Resident	(DN)	Resident Member
Resident	(MC)	Resident Member
Resident	(SG)	Resident Member
Resident	(AB)	Resident Member
Resident	(BA)	Resident Member
Resident	(JM)	Resident Member
Resident	(BT)	Resident Member
Sam Elliott	(SE)	Inspection and Continuous Improvement Manager
Paul Davey	(PD)	Housing Maintenance Manager

		Action
1	<u>Welcome</u>	
	Sam Elliott opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees.	
2	<u>Apologies</u>	
	Apologies were received from 2 residents.	
3	<u>Minutes of last Meeting</u>	
	The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
4	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
	Difficult Access (DA) SE circulated draft FAQ on "Difficult Access", members confirmed they had reviewed and were happy with the document. SE advised a data analysis has shown that working-age tenants in arrears are more likely not to provide access. Targeted communications are being developed to encourage access and promote flexibility in appointments. "DA" letters have been updated following member suggestions. Proportionate enforcement action (including legal notices) will be considered case-by-case. SE advised contractors will be reminded of their obligations and carry out quality checks on correspondence to prevent photocopied and inaccurate information being sent to	

	<p>residents. Members were not able to provide examples and agreed to report any future examples of poor communication.</p> <p>SE advised a revised Repairs Service Improvement Plan is being developed and will be shared with CIP at a future meeting.</p> <p>Members requested clarification of “MOT Day” (a one-day comprehensive maintenance visit for certain tenants).</p>	SE
5	<p><u>Update of Repairs Action Plan from Customer Journey Mapping</u></p>	
	<p>SE presented updates from the Repairs customer journey mapping exercise. Updates action plan to be provided and further updates to follow within future meetings.</p> <p>BA suggested including the URL alongside QR codes to make it easier for residents accessing the code on their phones sent via email. SE to take forward.</p>	SE SE
6	<p><u>Damp, Mould & Condensation (DMC) Policy and Service Standard</u></p>	
	<p>PD provided an overview of the DMC Policy which has been amended since sent to members.</p> <p>The DMC Policy has been updated to align with new government guidance and the Awaab’s Law requirements. The most recent change relates to emergency timescales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previously defined as “within one working day.” • Now updated to “within 24 hours”, including weekends. • For example, if reported at 3pm on Friday, the hazard must be resolved by 3pm on Saturday. <p>The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) currently has 29 hazard categories. Awaab’s Law focuses specifically on damp, mould, and household safety.</p> <p>If damp or mould is caused by a resident’s actions (e.g. unmaintained shrubs against external walls), South Essex Homes (SEH) may carry out remedial work but residents could be recharged.</p> <p>SEH will always provide clear advice and options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents may choose to arrange the work themselves (often cheaper). • If SEH undertakes the work, an additional 10% admin fee and VAT will apply. • Payment instalments can be arranged for residents unable to pay in full. <p>Members raised concern about fairness where garden issues existed prior to moving in. PD confirmed that the new Voids Garden Standard (2025) now ensures consistency for properties at re-let stage.</p> <p>PD to circulate a copy of the Voids Garden Standard to all members.</p> <p><u>Emergency Cases (within 24 hours):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples: Severe mould in a child’s bedroom, health risks to people with breathing conditions, or immune suppression. • Contractor must attend within 2 hours of report and remove immediate hazards within 24 hours. 	PD

- If repairs cannot be completed within that timeframe, temporary accommodation must be offered (hotel, guest room, or void flat).
- Residents may refuse to move, but SEH must document that health advice and risks were explained.
- All emergency hazards must be resolved first; secondary issues will be treated as significant cases.

Significant Cases (within 10 working days)

- Examples: Localised mould in bathrooms or kitchens.
- SEH will inspect within 10 working days.
- Within 3 working days of the inspection, residents receive a written report including:
 - Damp/mould readings and photographs.
 - Description of required works and repair dates.
 - Advice on ventilation and heating use.
- Reports are sent by email where possible or posted if no email is available.

Healthy Homes Advisors will complete inspections and reports.

Two new roles being recruited:

- DMC Team Leader – to ensure compliance with response times.
- Contract Administrator – to monitor contractor performance and repair completion.

SEH will use data monitoring to identify repeat DMC cases and install preventative measures such as:

- Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) systems.
- Thermal boarding or other insulation methods.

These will be installed at SEH's cost where reoccurring issues are identified, as prevention is more cost-effective than repeated repairs.

Residents queried recent repair delays and unclear communication regarding DMC works.

PD confirmed new processes will ensure residents receive updates and written reports. Members supported the zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould and the no-blame culture promoted by the Housing Ombudsman.

- Members requested that any public-facing guidance:
 - Use resident-friendly language.
 - Include images of common issues (e.g., rising damp, condensation).
 - Be available in multiple languages and accessible formats (colour contrast and translation tools available via website).

SE confirmed that whilst the DMC booklet cannot be translated on the website, the information is contained within the dedicated DMC webpages which uses Recite Me software which is suitable for translation, read aloud in various languages and meets the needs of residents who are neurodivergent as the colour can be changed etc.

