

**Tenant Challenge Panel**  
**Rent Recovery scrutiny review report**



**April 2025**  
**Draft report**

## Contents

### 1. Who are the Tenant Challenge Panel?

### 2. Methodology

### 3. Meeting summaries

- 3.1 Meeting 1: Scoping of the review
- 3.2 Meeting 2: Meeting with Lindsey Phillips Systems and Technical Officer– Overview of Rent Recovery
- 3.3 Meeting 3: Meeting with Revenues and Benefits Manager Clare Fowkes and reviewing Housemark performance data
- 3.4 Meeting 4: Meeting with Lindsey Phillips on escalation policies and processes for rent recovery
- 3.5 Meeting 5: Meeting with Stephen Oliver Solicitor at Derbyshire Law Centre
- 3.6 Meeting 6: Holding on to a Home Study and draft recommendations
- 3.7 Meeting 7: Meeting with Lindsey Phillips on draft recommendations

### 4. Final word

### 5. Recommendations

### 6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Current Arrears Letters(CAL) 1,,2 &3 letters

Appendix 2 – New processes flow chart and procedures

Appendix 3 – Copy of Introductory / Secure Notices

Appendix 4 – Housemark Data

Appendix 5 – Pre-action protocol

Appendix 6 – Holding on to a home report

Appendix 7 – Recommendations for review

## **1. Who are the Tenant Challenge Panel?**

The Tenant Challenge Panel known as the 'TCP' are a group of tenants who meet on a monthly basis to scrutinise areas of the housing service.

The group choose an area of the housing service they would like to scrutinise. They invite managers and staff from the identified service to their meetings to discuss areas of their service and identify recommendations for improvements that they would like to make. A tenant scrutiny review takes approximately six months to complete, culminating in the production of a final report and action plan with recommendations for consideration by the housing service.

As always, we would like to recognise and thank all the members of the TCP for the time and commitment given to review rent recovery within Chesterfield Borough Council.

TCP membership: Rita Stanley, Karen Francis, Tony Hedley, Phil Simpson, Marion Gerrard, Jayne Peplow, Dave Hardy.

## **2. Methodology**

For the rent recovery tenant scrutiny review the monthly TCP meetings included:

- Presentations from and discussions with relevant managers / staff
- Reviewing performance data and information
- Looking at complaint information
- Gaining an understanding of current legislation and tenant rights and responsibilities

## **3. Meeting summaries**

### **3.1 Meeting 1: October 2024 Rent Recovery – scoping meeting**

The group were provided with an introduction to the rents service and how the team's work was split between rent recovery (management of rent collection and recovery) and rent administration (setting and billing). It was decided by the group that they would like to concentrate on rent recovery for this review.

The group talked about introductory tenancies and how tenants can request a review of a served notice which then goes to a committee who decide if the tenancy will be ended or not. There were discussions on refunds, write offs (current and former tenancy), direct debits, universal credit, levels of arrears and the difference between those who can't pay and those who won't pay.

Once TCP decided to review rent recovery, the group asked that we invite a rents manager to give them an overview of the recovery service and they also explored how tenancy support officers work with people with rent arrears.

### **3.2 Meeting 2: November 2024 - meeting with Lindsey Phillips – overview of rent recovery**

Lindsay explained the background to how the council manage rents and rent collection using a computerised housing rents system.

Lindsay also set out how rent can be paid, the impact of Universal Credit, rent statements and the actions that the team can take if rent is not paid and the challenges of taking rent arrears actions. Key items discussed included:

- Rent is paid weekly but people can choose to pay weekly or monthly. If arrears are accrued on an account the system will issue automatic arrears letters (there are 3 standard letters for tenants - see **Appendix 1**)
- An introductory tenancy is for an initial 12-month period and has its own rent processes to follow. After the 12-month period the tenancy becomes a secure tenancy with a new set of rent processes to follow. An introductory tenancy can be extended by 6 months if there are any anti-social behaviour issues or rent arrears. There are a total of 32 different rent processes at present dependent on a number of factors including what type of tenancy the tenant has and the level of arrears on the account. The rent team are currently looking at the number of escalation policies they have to try and reduce these and simplify the process. The team hope this will also allow them to proactively intervene and offer support to tenants early on.
- The group learnt that some tenants may experience circumstances which lead to them not being able to pay their rent and there are also some tenants who won't pay, and we need processes in place enabling us to respond to these different situations.
- Universal credit is paid in arrears, and it can take 2/3 months to assess a claim. This can impact on a rent balance significantly. The Council can request that payments for rent are made directly to Chesterfield Borough Council. There is a migration of people moving over from housing benefit to universal credit although some people are not included within this (e.g. those of a pensionable age). It was explained that tenants were made aware of what they should claim at property sign up. The rents team will help and signpost tenants to other services, including the DWP, to maximise their income. The rents team also work closely with the housing officers and tenancy support officers to ensure tenants are supported where needed and are confident that information is available for tenants.
- The communication and accessibility group have reviewed the arrears letters sent to tenants and the newly revised letters will be introduced and have

information about where to go for help and support and reiterate the importance of making contact to discuss any issues. In addition, a nudge letter reminding tenants about their rent payments was discussed.

- The TCP group asked about what happens if there is no response to letters. It was advised that the rents team will try and call / visit tenants where needed when arrears increase. There can be occasions where some tenants may not answer their phones or doors when visited so this can be a complex issue to address. Within the new process (**Appendix 2**) being developed, the team are trying to call and visit more earlier on in the process and will work with the housing team to look at who has arrears and get input from the housing officers who may have more information on what is happening for the tenant.
- Tenants receive an annual statement each year detailing the transactions on their rent account for the last 12 months. The group commented on the use of a minus sign showing a credit on the rent balance not being clear and confusing for some tenants. A query was raised about people who overpay as a safety net and the issues this can create. The reason that we don't like to have too much overpayment (credit) is that people can use this to 'hide' money in extreme circumstances. This is something we are audited around and have to monitor. There was a group discussion around whether there should be a set amount which someone can be in credit by explained in policy, this is difficult to do as some tenants may pay a number of months' rent in advance
- The group were advised that the total arrears balance (at the time of the meeting) was £3.3 million, this was broken down into £1.1m former tenant arrears and £2.2 million in current arrears.
- Explanation of legal action. Serving notice (**Appendix 3**) is the first step of legal recovery action and should be served in person at the property. If there is no one home then this will be posted and signed / dated. For introductory tenancies, tenants can request the notice is reviewed, this is done by a panel including councillors, legal representatives and the tenant. They are given the opportunity to explain their circumstances and explain why they have not paid their rent. The panel will decide if the notice was served correctly and the next steps the tenant and council will take. A repayment plan can be arranged as part of this. Introductory tenancies can be extended to 18 months where needed. For introductory tenancies that go to court, the judge has no discretionary powers and will set a date for the property to be returned. For secure tenancies, once notice is served the team will try to get payments made but if none are received the tenancy will go to court and a judge can order a County Court Judgment which can be suspended as long as a payment agreement is stuck to. Where people don't pay it goes back to court to apply for an eviction warrant, issuing eviction warrants can be appealed by the tenant numerous times. The Council pay for each individual court hearing and the costs associated with this are extensive. Court costs are passed back to tenants,

and this will be requested when the case goes to court, this is communicated to tenants within letters and legal documentation.

- If tenants are evicted, they may still get re-housed through homelessness as the council may have a duty to re-home in certain circumstances.
- Former tenant arrears. Where a tenant passes away, we will try to recoup any arrears from their estate. Legally we cannot chase a debt after six years. The repayments that can be set by the rents team or the court for arrears, can be significantly lower than if taken from someone's universal credit / other benefit payments. If rent payments are not received there is no money to invest in the housing service received by tenants.
- Discretionary housing payments can be used to 'top up' a tenants rent where needed e.g. under occupancy (also known as bedroom tax) and there is also a housing support fund available. There are certain eligibility criteria for these, and it is dependent on the circumstances of the tenant. There was a discussion about people who may need to downsize, to prevent paying the under-occupancy charge, but a current lack of suitable properties were preventing them from doing so. An additional issue relates to children who may have parents who live separately and require a second bedroom. The group felt there could be more done to promote the help available through the discretionary housing payments and the housing support fund to tenants, but this is a limited amount of funding and consideration has to be given to how this is made available for tenants
- Fifty-three week rent year. The group discussed the 2024/25 53-rent week which applies this year and people claiming universal credit will not receive a 53<sup>rd</sup> week rent payment, this doesn't affect people who are entitled to housing benefit. This makes things more challenging for tenants as well as the migration over to universal credit. Tenants may not be aware (where payments are made directly) about the issue the 53<sup>rd</sup> week can create. This happens approx. every 6 / 7 year as an average. As more people transfer onto universal credit this becomes a larger issue for tenants and the council. If the 4,450 properties on universal credit didn't pay the 53<sup>rd</sup> week (with an average rent) this could lead to £331,000 additional unpaid rent in this financial year.
- Rents team. The rent and revenues team currently have 3 x part time staff, 2 x full time at present (1 currently on long term sick), This is the equivalent to 4.1 full time staff to deliver the service.
- Other discussion concerned about how the number of void properties affects the rent received and this will be explored and discussed further as part of the scrutiny review and working closely with Bolsover and Rykned and meet regularly and share best practice for recovery work.

### 3.3 Meeting 3: December 2024 Meeting with Revenues and Benefits manager Clare Fowkes and reviewing Housemark data

#### Housing benefit and Universal Credit

Clare Fowkes (CF) advised the group of the benefit system for the payment of rent through Universal Credit and Housing benefit and the challenges it poses for the Housing Service and tenants. CF advised of the work done by the rents and benefit teams to support tenants in claiming and maintaining their payments. The summary of the information provide to the group is below:

- CF advised Housing Benefit has now been closed for working aged people and people are being migrated to Universal Credit. Majority of people appear to be managing the switchover effectively. Housing benefit is means tested(worked out based on your income and other benefits received), and there is a lot of legislation around this. The revenues team are looking to identify tenants of pension age who are not currently claiming and may be entitled. People who are state pension age will remain on housing benefit rather than migrating to universal credit.
- The benefits team have identified a number of households that are also entitled to pension credit and are providing support via tenancy support to claim this where needed. It is expected that everyone of working age will be switched over to universal credit by March 2026.
- Claire explained where someone is of pension age, and someone is of working age on a joint tenancy the person of working age will move over to universal credit and the person of pension age will remain on housing benefit. Question asked about whether can request direct payments to the Council, this is not usually granted unless there are arrears. Important that where you know someone who may need help, they are encouraged to contact the service.
- Where someone is on universal credit and then becomes pension age it would then default back to housing benefit but would require a new claim being made.
- There are two parts to pension credit: Guaranteed credit and Savings credit. Someone may be entitled to one or both elements. If unsure tenants can speak with someone from rents / benefits advisor, as can be quite a complicated calculation.
- If a tenant claims Personal Independent Payment (PIP) before pension age they will keep it once they reach pension age, if they make a claim after pension age, they will be entitled to attendance allowance. There Is no mobility element to attendance allowance.
- A TCP member mentioned the issues that claiming universal credit can cause due to a delay in receiving payments and payments being paid in arrears which can place a tenants rent account in arrears when they aren't. The DWP are doing this to try and reduce cases of overpayment. Again people are

encouraged to contact the rent team for help. Claire expressed the importance of tenants communicating with the team where needed as then support can be offered where required.

- Universal credit is a payment which brings together all the allowances someone is entitled to and is made as one payment to the person per month. There are two forms of universal credit migration one is natural and one is managed migration. For people who are paid 4 weekly rather than per calendar month there will be one month per year where two wage payments are made within a calendar month which can then affect the amount of universal credit received for that period. Members feel helpful for people to be made aware this can happen and although payments balance out people may find it difficult to budget effectively as payments can go up and down.
- Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) – Administered by Chesterfield Borough Council, budget set by Government and don't know the amount until January each year. DHP is intended to help people where their housing costs are more than they are receiving. This year (2024) the amount given by Government was £140,000. People can apply online or via a paper form whichever is preferred, and have to be claiming universal credit or housing benefit to be considered eligible. Criteria used is to look at income and expenditure. DHP helps approximately 300 households per year and the DHP is always spent. A benefits or housing officer will do a benefits check with people to ensure they are receiving everything they are entitled to. Will look at expenditure and budgeting. Will look at history including is someone under occupying a property and discussions about whether they can afford this longer term or need to consider a move elsewhere. Question asked about financial help for people who downsize council properties. There are tenant incentive schemes available for people who downsize under certain circumstances. If refused for DHP tenants can ask for the decision to be looked at again but there is no tribunal process as the fund is 'discretionary'.
- Household Support Fund (HSF) was introduced following the cost-of-living crisis, Derbyshire County Council (DCC) receive this funding (approximately £5m). A sum of this is then allocated to Chesterfield Borough Council (approx. £120,000). This is used primarily for people at risk of homelessness to secure accommodation / avoid evictions for rent arrears etc. There are occasions where this can be used to reduce council tax arrears too. Consideration of where the money spent is informed by need at the time. The money allocated is always spent in full. No application form process for this at Chesterfield Borough Council and referrals are made by tenancy support, law centre etc. Can be eligible for this if in employment and / or private tenancies, decisions made on case-by-case basis and household circumstances. Housing Support Fund is being extended into 2025 /2026 after lobbying. Derbyshire County Council decided on how they wanted to use their element of the Housing Support Fund budget and made payments to people of pension age and

considered to be on a low income, this led to people who hadn't applied receiving a voucher which could be cashed.

### Housemark

Housemark is a benchmarking system where social landlords input their performance and costs and can compare where they stand against other social landlords. TCP members can have access to House mark should they wish to look at this. The reports used for this meeting are focused on rents and comparison of landlords which have between, 5,000 – 15,000 properties. The reports looked at were Rent collected, current and former arrears, Total arrears and write offs, void loss and universal credit tenants in arrears. All reports used are in **Appendix 4**.

- The TCP raised a concern about how there appears to be a lack of improvement around rent collection / arrears from when Arvato managed the rents. This has now been fetched back in house, but some issues continue to exist, and universal credit is contributing to this.
- Questions were asked about the procedures regarding eviction, and this can be very complex and there is a lot of legislation.
- Discussion about trying to get payments in advance previously but this was unsuccessful. Some landlords will request payments in advance and when Chesterfield Borough Council tried this it was not successful, and the trial was stopped. Discussion about whether this should be considered again and there is no way of enforcing this through the tenancy agreement.
- Question asked about when there is so much financial help available through Chesterfield Borough Council why do we still have so high rent arrears?
- Discussion about how the arrears were much lower when it was housing benefit and payments made directly. For universal credit can only have direct payments when tenant is in arrears.

### **3.4 Meeting 4: January 2025 – meeting with Lindsey Phillips (LP) – Feedback from previous session and escalation processes and policies**

#### Feedback from meetings 2 and 3

The meeting started with updates on the actions and questions raised in December's meeting.

With regards to write offs, LP explained Bolsover and Rykneld policies around write offs are very similar to our own. Mainly former arrears are written off rather than current arrears. There is an increase of insolvencies which cover rent accounts, and this is expected to continue to increase. At present there is no policy to cover insolvencies, and the group could ask that something is added into the tenancy agreement to state that rent arrears are not included in any debt relief orders but this would be a huge piece of work.

The Rents team try and encourage people to leave their rent out of a debt relief order but can't force payment. Arrears accrued after the debt relief order can be recovered. A question was asked about how often this is happening, so they know how big an issue this is. LP said it fluctuates throughout the year but can be between 50 – 60 per year, but this level may increase as more people take advantage of debt relief orders.

Rent being paid in advance has been trialled before. It was not overly successful and there is no legislation in place which supports this approach. Former tenant rent arrears can be written off after 9 months and legislation means that we are unable to chase the debt after 6 years. Looking at Housemark data is not necessarily comparing like for like as different social landlords may have different processes. A TCP member asked about use of bailiffs for nonpayment of rent. This can be challenging as can't really recover goods and when used previously the cost of the bailiffs was more than the money being recovered. The group discussed being able to differentiate between the people who can't pay versus the people who won't pay, so targeted action can be taken. This is being looked at further and more officer intervention is being introduced earlier on rather than just automated letters, so the team can identify who needs additional support.

We currently have in stock 8,725 dwelling properties and 3463 of our tenants are claiming universal credit. Updated figures (as at 02/05/25) from Lindsey Phillips show arrears at the end of 24/25 were £3,205,332.40, which means our arrears have increased from 23/24 by £14,880.87. £1.3m of these arrears relate to tenants in receipt of universal credit. Chesterfield is an area where a high proportion of people claim some form of benefits. Over 70% of Chesterfield Borough Council tenants are claiming some form of benefit. 52.9% of tenants are in rent arrears including 30.43% of tenants who claim universal credit. TCP members are aware how much universal credit is impacting on rent collection. Some tenants may not be aware they need to claim the housing element of universal credit and the rents team are trying to support tenants who are moving over to universal credit, so they understand what they need to do. There are 1,950 tenants on direct payments at present.

The group asked whether not being able to pay in person at the contact centre has had an impact on rent payments being made. There has been no noticeable impact from this change.

### **Escalation policies & processes for rent**

LP talked through the current escalation process and the plans for the new escalation policies and processes (**see Appendix2**). The new escalation policy and process will be for tenants who go into arrears from the date of introduction and not tenants who are already in arrears.

LP shared details of how many of each stage letter are currently sent out each week and this evidences that less letters are sent out as the process moves on. Part of the process which was previously helpful was when rent officers were part of the new tenant sign up process so any issues could be identified early on. This ceased during COVID, and the new process will look at how this can be reintroduced.

LP explained there are many pre action protocols (**see Appendix 5**) which have to be completed and when you add in our additional protocols this increases how much we try and make contact to resolve the situation. There can still be instances where someone will not engage until the court eviction stage. The hope is with the new process we will be pushing for contact much earlier on in the process than we are doing now. Members were surprised that in often a judge will find in favour of tenants regardless of how much evidence we have tried to speak with the person about their arrears. There are costs for taking each case to court and it can go back and forth numerous times which can get very expensive for the council. It costs approx. £5000 for an eviction. There was a suggestion that if members of the group wanted to attend court to see the process in action, they could do this independently, as it is held as an open court session.

- A question was asked if someone is evicted whether we then have a further duty to house them, LP explained there are instances where we have a duty to rehouse someone, this may be in private rented accommodation or social housing providers including the council. There have been approximately 6-7 evictions so far this year.
- A software programme called accounts analytics has been purchased which can profile tenants, so we understand more about payment patterns and identify any trends about the tenants' profile regarding payment trends. This will also help to identify where to target more proactively.
- The new procedures are likely to be introduced in April 2025 and LP will keep the group informed about this.

### **3.5 Meeting 5: February 2025 – Legislation relating rents with Derbyshire Law Centre and their application with Lindsey Philips Chesterfield Borough Council**

Stephen Oliver (SO) from the Derbyshire Law Centre attended the group to discuss the work of the Law Centre in representing tenants facing court action in relation to rent arrears.

- SO advised that quite a few people who are having difficulty paying their rent will contact the Law Centre at very short notice e.g. when have a court date or a bailiff's appointment. These are often at the later stages of arrears actions and by this point tenants will have had opportunities to speak with the Council about rent difficulties. Most tenants facing court action are secure tenants where their 'security of tenure' can make it difficult for the Council to evict tenants. Judges will often consider 'is it reasonable?' and will give tenants a chance to repay arrears. If someone has an introductory tenancy this can be easier for the Council to evict someone due the lower security of tenure.
- The Law Centre and the Council try to identify common ground to help people remain in their homes. This may include negotiation on the tenant's behalf and

liaising with the Council on behalf of the tenant. This may become an agreed order. The Law Centre support a lot of people who may have mental ill health or other vulnerabilities who may need additional support to address their rent arrears.

- Law Centre will signpost people to Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre (DUWC) regarding benefit entitlement and support around benefits if appropriate.
- A TCP member asked LP if there is still support for new tenants when they sign for a property. This does still happen as part of the signing up process of a tenancy agreement. In addition, there are new tenancy visits which have commenced where housing officers will visit new tenants and can address any concerns. Lots of attempts are made by the rents team and housing officers to try and support people to understand their rent and responsibilities.
- Previously when a tenant signed up (pre COVID) tenants Housing Officers visit the property and then meet with rents officers to finalise all the rent payment details etc. This ceased during COVID, but the team are looking to get this back in place for tenants, as is beneficial. It is also felt this will be useful as face-to-face contact with the tenant so encourages discussion about any other needs e.g. furniture poverty etc.
- Cllr Innes explained that the customer service centre also have workers who can advise and help tenants around rent and rent arrears. Eviction is the very last thing which the Council want and will try and work with tenants to avoid this.
- A TCP Member asked how many people 'won't pay' rather than 'can't pay' who access the Derbyshire Law Centre. How do we respond to this as it is a different issue when people 'won't pay'. Cllr Innes explained this can be difficult as all we can do is try and support tenants initially and be proactive. We start from a trust-based perspective, peoples' circumstances can change very quickly due to loss of job etc and many people having a lack of savings. There can be a few vulnerabilities which can contribute to someone becoming a 'won't payer'. Rents will not know if someone is a 'can't pay' tenant or a 'won't pay' tenant and may not be aware of someone's vulnerabilities until the very late stages of eviction, they have to weigh up the decision to look to evict or not.
- A TCP Member asked if the revised process rents are introducing will be beneficial. Lindsey hopes this will be as is more proactive which should assist where needed to make recovery action once commenced a more efficient process. This should also mean that the 'system' will know how frequently someone pays their rent so will only issue automatic rent arrear letters after that period of time has elapsed.

### **3.6 Meeting 6: March 2025 – Holding on to a Home Study and Other Recommendations**

Holding on to a home study – this was a study conducted between 2022 and 2024 around the issue of rents payment. The key themes from this report were shared with the group for discussion and for them to see the recommendations it made (**Appendix 6**)

The group also received the list of recommendations they had made during the last few months to review before they were added to this report (see **Appendix 7**)

### **3.7 Meeting 7: April 2025 – Draft recommendations review with Lindsey Phillips**

The group went over their recommendations with Lindsey Phillips to review which one were deliverable and what progress had been made. The recommendations are set out in part X of the report

See Recommendation in section 5 for information

## **4. Final word**

Members of the TCP would like to thank all the staff and managers who came to speak with them and provided information to inform the tenant scrutiny review regarding rent recovery. This gave a real insight into the service and the challenges which the service currently face. Additional thanks is given to staff from the Chesterfield Law Centre who visited the group.

The final report and recommendations are felt to not only be good for tenants but also good for the service as has the potential to lead to improved use of resources and achieve better recovery processes and procedures.

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## 5. Recommendations

The recommendations below were agreed by the TCP members following the completion of the tenant scrutiny review of Rent Recovery

Recommendation Theme	Meeting reference	Recommendation	Initial Housing Rent Service response	Updates	Action completed
1. A communication campaign developed between the rents service and the Council's communication team	Meeting 1: Oct 2024	1.1 Campaign to encourage more tenants to sign up to pay their rent by direct debit	This is regularly promoted when revenues staff speak to tenants. The service will work with the Council's communications team and Customer Services team to run direct debit campaigns twice a year, in September 2025 and in January /February 2026.		Ongoing
	Meeting 2 Nov 24	1.2 Explore how we can make people more aware of benefit help they may be entitled to and encourage them to contact us	The recently redesigned rent and rent nudge letters all included information about benefit entitlement and how to access it.  The Council also funds a benefits take up officer		Complete  Complete

Recommendation Theme	Meeting reference	Recommendation	Initial Housing Rent Service response	Updates	Action completed
			<p>who works part time to promote benefits.</p> <p>A social media campaign will be scheduled, signposting tenants to additional help and support.</p> <p>Text messaging will be introduced, encouraging people to get in touch</p>	<p>To be implemented during Q4 2025</p> <p>To be implemented during Q1 2026</p>	
	<b>Meeting 2: Nov 2024</b>	1.3 Explore range of communication methods to meet tenants' communication needs when looking at contacting someone about their rent account / rent payments	The service will use a wide range of communication methods, including text, email, telephone and letter. These varied approaches will be monitored for success during the final quarter of the year and during 2026.	To be implemented during Q4 2025 / Q1 2026	
	<b>Meeting 2: Nov 2024</b>	1.4 Increase promotion of	The rents team actively contact tenants that		

Recommendation Theme	Meeting reference	Recommendation	Initial Housing Rent Service response	Updates	Action completed
		Discretionary housing payments and the housing support fund to tenants	<p>need help and the 2024/25 fund has been fully utilised.</p> <p>The service will build this into the campaign that will be delivered about benefits (see recommendation 2 on this table)</p>		
	<b>Meeting 3: Dec 2024</b>	1.5 Raise awareness for people who are paid 4 weekly rather than per calendar month as there will be one month per year where two wage payments are made within a calendar month which can then affect the amount of universal credit received for that period	We will look to develop a leaflet to guide tenants in receipt of UC on this matter.	Complete during Q3 2025	
	<b>Meeting 4: Jan 2025</b>	1.6 Rent ‘nudge’ letter to be developed by the	The rent ‘nudge’ letters have been reviewed and implemented/		Completed

Recommendation Theme	Meeting reference	Recommendation	Initial Housing Rent Service response	Updates	Action completed
		Communication and accessibility group			
	Meeting 5: Feb 2025	1.7 Encourage more tenants to have direct payments from the DWP for their rent where relevant	Once tenants are 4 weeks in arrears we are applying directly to DWP for Universal credit payments to come to us directly. We are achieving positive increases in the number of direct payments from the DWP.		Completed
	Meeting 5: Feb 2025	1.8 Comms campaign to advise tenants to prioritise their rent payments over other bills	A comms campaign will be developed and run during October and November, prior to the Christmas period.		
2. Rent Collection	Meeting 3: Dec 2024	2.1 Consider whether it is possible to receive rent payments in advance as part of next review of tenancy agreement	This recommendation will be considered by the Housing Service as part of the next review of the tenancy agreement.		

Recommendation Theme	Meeting reference	Recommendation	Initial Housing Rent Service response	Updates	Action completed
	<b>Meeting 2: Nov 2024</b>	2.2 Consider whether there should be a limit in how much a tenant can be in credit by on their rent account	The housing rent service is not minded making changes to the existing process. Overpayments are regularly checked and tenants are informed if their account is in credit. Refunds are made when required.		Recommendation not agreed.
	<b>Meeting 4: Jan 2025</b>	Monitor via the action plan the new processes within the rents service to increase earlier contact with tenants who are in arrears (Due to be introduced April 2025)	Rent collection statistics are produced monthly and reported to the strategic housing board and other Council committees such as Standards and Audit Committee. Monitoring is in place and regular updates provided.		Ongoing
<b>3. Tenancy management</b>	<b>Meeting 6: Mar 2025</b>	3.1 Explore whether the extension period (currently six months) for introductory tenancies can be extended or whether	This period is set in legislation. Legally, an introductory tenancy is for 12 months but can be extended for a maximum of a further 6	N/A	Completed

Recommendation Theme	Meeting reference	Recommendation	Initial Housing Rent Service response	Updates	Action completed
		this is set in legislation.	months for rent arrears or Anti-Social Behaviour		
4. Allocations and Housing Register	Meeting 7: Apr 2025	4.1 Explore whether we can bring back the ‘vetting interview to prove status, financial status etc	Prospective tenants do have to provide information re: financial situation and identification. Personal Housing Plans have been introduced to replace the ‘vetting’ process	N/A	Completed