



COMMUNITY VOICE FOCUS GROUP MINUTES

RSH Consumer Standards

16th March 2026

Present: Tami Reeve, Keith Lumbers, Sue Hickling, Rhiannon Jeans, Marianne Sonksen, Stewart Pearson, Jill Milner, Simon Milner, Trevor Davey.

Ongo Staff: Maureen Mathieson, Becky Johns, Wendy Wolfe, Gemma Willey

1. Welcome, Apologies & Housekeeping

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies had been received from: Harry Jackson, Dawn Johnson, Charmaine Mande, Judith Tomlinson, Jim Newcombe, Tima Obo Omari, Tracey Bain, Eric Gosling, Sharon Wright (Ongo).

The meeting was then handed over to Becky who was leading the meeting.

2. Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

Becky explained that the objective of the session today is to consult with the group on the consumer standards. To gain insight from the group that will feed into the annual self-assessments. This piece of work is extremely important, and Becky stated how valuable the input from community voice was.

The session will be interactive to allow input from everyone and Becky reminded members that although it will be ok to use personal experiences it is important to keep the perspectives of all tenants in mind and be open to the diverse needs of our tenants and how they may want to interact differently with us as a landlord.

A presentation was shared with members during the session and Becky went through the 4 consumer standards, explaining what each one covered.

The Consumer Standards are rules that social landlords must follow. They exist to make sure tenants are safe, treated fairly, listened to, and live in good-quality homes.

- **Safety and Quality Standard:**

Your home should be safe, well-maintained and fit to live in. This standard is about the condition of your home and how repairs are managed. You should feel safe in your home, and problems should be fixed properly and in good time.

- **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard:**

You should be kept informed, listened to and taken seriously. This standard is about communication, complaints, and being open with tenants. You should not be left in the dark. Your landlord should listen, explain and be accountable.

- **Neighbourhood and Community Standard:**
Your area should be safe, clean and well cared for. This standard focuses on communal areas and the wider neighbourhood. Your landlord should help keep the places around your home safe and pleasant.
- **Tenancy Standard:**
Your tenancy should be fair, clear and secure. This standard is about tenancy rights, support, and fair treatment. Your tenancy should give you stability, clarity and support to stay in your home.

Self-assessments are carried out to check how well we are doing as a landlord and if we are meeting the Consumer Standards. It involves looking at services provided by Ongo to identify what is working well and to identify where things have gone wrong to take action to improve.

Other types of consultation to be carried out include consulting with tenants in different ways, e.g. workshops, surveys and feedback forms, learning from complaints and the Ombudsman cases. Involving tenants with different needs, backgrounds and experiences. To make sure everyone has a chance to provide their views.

3. **Consulting on our self-assessments**

Becky explained this meeting was to ask for views from members to help check if the self-assessment reflects real tenant experience. Members were asked to provide honest views about how our services work in practice, and to think about their experience as:

- A tenant
- A panel or group member
- Someone who hears feedback from other tenants

Think about:

- What works well
- What doesn't work
- Where you think improvements are needed

Members were asked when they provided feedback to think about whether Ongo services feel fair, clear and consistent, including how well we are doing in terms of communication, handling repairs and complaints, taking account of vulnerabilities and following up on actions. Also, if information Ongo share is clear, timely, easy to understand and accessible to different tenants.

Becky went through each of the standards and asked members to provide comments for each one, and these were noted on a flip chart, as follows:

Safety & Quality:

This means that homes must be safe, secure and meet legal safety requirements, e.g. gas, electricity, fire and building safety. Repairs should be recorded properly, completed within reasonable timescales, prioritised if they affect health or safety, Damp, mould and structural issues must be taken seriously. Landlords must act on survey findings and professional advice.

Members' comments included:

- New builds have no issues with safety
- Gas safety certificates provide assurance
- Electricians checked for new let properties
- Policies & procedures are reviewed regularly
- Need to ensure tenants understand about safety
- More communication re: electrical / fire safety, e.g. overloading plugs using extension leads
- More use of text messages to get information out to tenants
- Provide more sockets in properties (recommended use of 2 double sockets)
- Follow up and close the loop with the safety officer
- Provide support to those with vulnerabilities, communicate in a way they will understand and can access information
- Not all properties have fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors fitted
- Improve communication between Ongo (Wellbeing Officer) and Personal Assistant for those who need additional support
- Contact details to be provided in the introduction pack for retirement schemes
- Some complex repairs are not always followed up
- Using contractors for basic repairs, instead of in-house staff
- Ongo's maintenance assistants not able to carry out basic jobs, resulting in multiple visits to a property
- Individuals commented on positive experiences they've had with Ongo in terms of good communication

Transparency, Influence & Accountability:

This means that tenants should receive clear, honest information, updates about repairs and complaints, reasons for delays or decisions. How to make a complaint, what stage the complaint is at, when to expect a response, complaints must follow set timescales, be escalated when requested, be responded to fully and clearly, and tenants should have opportunities to provide feedback, influence services and raise concerns.

Members' comments included:

- Information on the website is easy to find using the search option
- Vulnerable tenants who can't use the website and don't know where to find information would need additional support
- Suggest that policies which may link to another one, hyperlinks are used within a policy
- Letters / emails to include a contact name
- Produce videos with tenants to help share information
- Publish more information on what Ongo are doing, "You said, we are doing" examples (this information is available on the website and is being refreshed every quarter)
- Advertise the neighbourhood events more widely
- More visibility of Neighbourhood Officer

Neighbourhood & Community

This means that areas should be safe, clean and well cared for and the standard focuses on communal areas and the wider neighbourhood. It includes shared areas (such as paths, gardens, blocks or estates) and these should be maintained, safe, clean and usable.

Members' comments included:

- Reporting ASB is available on the MyHome app, website etc.
- Suggestion to have more accessible data available on the number of cases
- A varied response on keeping shared spaces safe and pleasant etc.
- A schedule of works for grounds maintenance to be available for tenants
- Share more information on partnership working with Local Council in terms of waste etc.
- Bungalows in some areas have open areas to the rear of the properties (no gates), issues are being caused by young people
- Not enough bins in some areas
- Raise more awareness to tenants on looking after their local neighbourhoods
- Share information with local neighbourhoods on what work has been done in neighbourhoods, tailor information for each region, include Key News.

Tenancy standard:

This means that tenants should understand their tenancy agreement, know their rights and responsibilities. Tenancies should be managed fairly, issued correctly, and reviewed when circumstances change. Support should be offered when tenants are struggling to manage their tenancy, and if there is a risk of tenancy failure. Evictions should be a last resort.

Becky asked members the following questions:

What is the tenancy experience like for our tenants?

- A member said that when signing up for the tenancy they were made to feel like they were joining a community
- A member referred to not receiving a dec grant when moving in
- A member felt that tenants may not look at their tenancy agreement in full detail when first taking on their tenancy until they needed something. Think about what can be done to make tenants more aware of their tenancy agreements
- The details available on MyHome app are useful when taking on a new tenancy
- Ongo work with advocates for those who need additional support in terms of vulnerabilities

Do you feel support is available for our tenants?

- It would be useful to have more information available on benefits / financial support
- Individuals felt they had received good support from their own experience

Do you feel tenancies are managed fairly?

- Members felt that generally it feels fair, using feedback from other tenants.

What could we do to improve the tenancy experience?

- Induction pack for new tenants (retirement schemes)
- Sharing more information regionally
- Produce video about tenancies, to view before signing up to a property
- IVR messages to include information around support available
- Raise the profile of Ongo including more awareness of services, e.g. use communal areas, TV screens, local community events, engagement with tenants.

A member referred to a webinar they had attended, and a new scheme known as Dogs Trust, asking if Ongo could look into this. Becky explained that Ongo has a pet policy in place, whereas some organisations don't all have these. Ongo try to encourage responsible pet ownership and that pets are well looked after. A suggestion was made to improve communication about ownership of pets.

Becky explained that the next steps will be to use feedback etc. from the meeting. Wider tenant consultation with similar questions to be shared this week and all responses will be collated and themes created, with a report produced and submitted to Customer Focus Committee and the Board. The final self-assessments will be publicised to wider tenants when completed.

4. Agenda item for next focus group meeting (May)

Wendy explained that the next CV focus group meeting in May will include the new Internal Auditors who will lead the session. This will allow time to include some training/overview about audit, plan for the year and explain what the Community Voice involvement would be in terms of customer facing audit scopes.

A reminder about the date and time of the meeting will be provided nearer the time.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meetings for community voice members will take place on:

- CV Main meeting – 14th April 2026 (election of officers), 1pm to 4pm
- CV focus group meeting – 18th May 2026 (1.30pm to 3.30pm)