Tenant & Landlord Panel Meeting Notes 9th July 2026

Topics:

- Changes to Service Charges
- Complaints
- Our Tenant Perception Survey Results

9 Tenant Representatives came to our July TALP meeting. We were also joined by observers from the Regulator of Social Housing.

TALP gives customers the opportunity to review Look Ahead's performance, provide feedback and shape improvements to services.

Action taken since the last meeting

We have...

✅ Shared the last draft of our new unsupported tenant handbook. We asked the Panel for their feedback and will share the final version at the next TALP meeting in October.



✅ Created a dedicated page on our website to share information about TALP and what happens at our meetings.

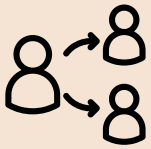


We are still working on...

🔧 Creating an easy read version of our Co-Production strategy that we can share with customers.



🔧 We'll start sharing this version of our TALP minutes with Look Ahead's board.



🔧 Launching a survey for new tenants to ask about their experience moving into their Look Ahead home.



Changes to Service Charges



The Panel heard about two new service charges that started on 6 July 2026 for some customers living in Look Ahead-owned supported housing.



The new charges are:

- Enhanced Housing Management charge
- Void Loss charge



Some Rough Sleeper Initiative services will pay a lower Enhanced Housing Management charge because they provide tenancy sustainment support.

Why have the charges been introduced?

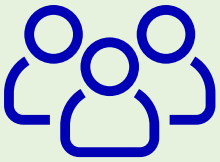


Supported housing needs more management than general housing.



This includes work to:

- Keep homes safe
- Make sure legal and safety requirements are met
- Manage properties properly
- Help customers keep and maintain their tenancies



The Enhanced Housing Management charge helps pay for housing management work carried out by Look Ahead's central teams.



This includes:

- Repairs
- Property compliance and safety checks

It does not pay for care or support services.



The Void Loss charge helps cover the cost of homes that are empty between tenancies.

Some supported housing homes can stay empty for longer because:

- Referrals take time
- Extra work may be needed before a new customer can move in

Help Available



Both charges can usually be paid through Housing Benefit.



Look Ahead has written to affected customers and local Housing Benefit teams to explain the changes.



Look Ahead has also set up a Hardship Fund for customers whose Housing Benefit does not cover all of the new charges, or who do not receive Housing Benefit.

This may include some customers who:

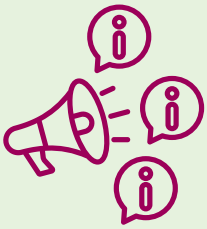


- Are working
- Receive Universal Credit
- Are students
- Only receive part of their housing costs through benefits.



Most of the affected customers live in our young people's services.

Affected customers have been told about the fund.



Staff have also been briefed so they can explain the support available and help customers apply.

Service Charge Changes - what we said

Tenants asked how the charges might affect people in different circumstances, including:



- Young people
- People who are working
- People in education
- People receiving Universal Credit
- People receiving only part of their Housing Benefit
- Customers living in homes owned by third-party landlords



The Panel heard that the new charges currently apply only to certain Look Ahead-owned supported housing properties.



Look Ahead will speak with third-party landlords before deciding whether similar charges should be introduced in those properties from April 2027.



Tenants were worried about whether some people would be able to afford the new charges.

The Panel agreed that:



- Information should be clear, easy to understand and shared at the right time.



- Examples should show how different customers might be affected.



- The Hardship Fund application process should be simple.



- Customers should get support if they find forms, letters or evidence difficult to complete.



- Nobody should be put off applying because the process is too complicated.



- Information about other local authority funding should also be shared where available.



- People who are not affected by the changes should be reassured so that they do not worry unnecessarily.

What will happen next?

We agreed to...



- Look at creating examples to show how the Hardship Fund works in different situations.



- Check that affected customers have received the information and support they need.



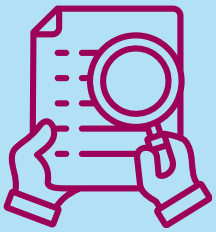
- Test whether customers understand the information being shared.



- Promote awareness of additional support where it is available.

Complaints - what's happening?

We reviewed complaints received between April and May 2026.



Look Ahead received 16 formal complaints during this period and another 17 concerns were resolved locally.

93.8% of complaints were responded to within our target timescales, which beats our target of 75%.



One customer had taken their complaint to the next stage because they were still unhappy with the outcome.





What the complaints were about

The biggest complaint theme was how customers felt they had been treated by staff.

A common issue was customers not receiving progress updates quickly enough.

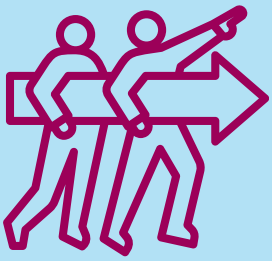
What we learnt from these complaints...



- Respond quickly and with empathy.
- Record complaints correctly from the beginning.
- Keep customers informed
- Follow up when concerns are raised.
- Learn from issues even if they don't become formal complaints

Complaints - what we said

Tenants asked about the difference between a complaint, a service request and a local resolution.



A local resolution was described as an initial request for action or help to put something right.



A complaint is when a customer says they are unhappy with Look Ahead's service, actions or response.



Tenants said the phrase "local resolution" was confusing. It could sound as though it only meant something resolved within an individual service.



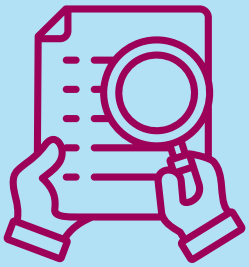
They said customers need:

- plain English definitions
- practical examples
- enough information to understand their options
- a glossary explaining common terms



The Panel suggested adding this information to the complaints and feedback section of the Tenant Handbook.

Complaints - what happens next



Here is what we agreed to do to improve:

Review the wording used to explain complaints, service requests and local resolutions based on customer feedback.

As part of this we will...



- Make sure definitions are in plain English.
- Provide examples to help people understand these definitions better.

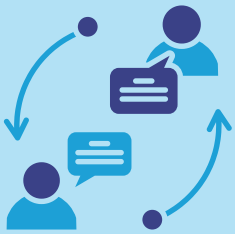


- Update the complaints policy and Tenant Handbook in line with these changes.

We will also...



- Make sure staff complete their anti-social behaviour training.



- Keep working to improve how we update customers about complaints, repairs and other issues, including what happens next and expected timescales.

Tenant Perception Survey Results



We shared the results of the 2025/26 Tenant Perception Survey.

The survey was sent to 803 customers living in Look Ahead-owned homes.

This included both customers living in supported housing and unsupported tenants.

39.9%

39.9% of these customers responded.

This was enough responses to give a reliable picture of what customers think about Look Ahead.

After our first Tenant Perception survey in 2023/24, we put together an action plan with input from TALP. The action plan focused on the areas that customers told us mattered most to them. These were:

Making our homes better

Listening to you and acting on feedback

More visible and engaged staff

Better information and communication

Responding better to anti-social behaviour

Progress made against the action plan



To improve satisfaction with homes and repairs we...



- Changed repairs contractors that were not performing well
- Improved repairs information in the Tenant Handbook and on the website
- Made repair responsibilities clearer
- Produced better information about damp and mould
- Commissioned an independent review of Look Ahead's approach to damp and mould

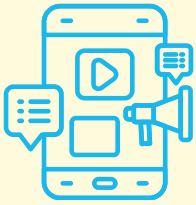


We also discussed how customers have influenced how Look Ahead designs, reviews and improves its services, including:

- Setting up the Customer Incident Panel
- Reviewing policies and procedures through Policy Stars
- Taking part in service design groups
- Helping recruit senior staff and Board members
- Developing the Co-production Strategy
- Contributing to the Better Outcomes Support and Services programme



To improve the visibility of senior leaders, we reviewed the Board's service visit programme to make sure they hear from a wider range of customers and services.



To improve communication and accessibility we:

- Improved the customer section of the website
- Invested in translation services
- Translated key information into the languages most commonly used across services
- Involved customers in shaping the Heads Up magazine and the Customer Annual Report

What the latest survey results showed



78.7% of surveyed customers were satisfied with the overall service from Look Ahead.

Customers gave particularly strong feedback about:

- Being treated fairly and with respect (82.7%)
- Homes being safe (82.5%)
- Repairs services (79.9%)
- Homes being well maintained (78.9%)





Customers were more satisfied with the repairs service overall (79.9%), and the time taken to complete repairs (73.5%) when compared with previous survey results.

Areas where more improvement is needed:

- Complaints handling (58.9%)
- Response to antisocial behaviour (72.3%)
- Communication when things go wrong
- Helping customers understand Look Ahead's contribution to local neighbourhoods and communities (69.2% satisfied with Look Ahead's contribution to their neighbourhood)





The survey also showed lower satisfaction among:

- Younger customers
- Customers living in unsupported housing



The Panel agreed that Look Ahead should speak directly with these groups to better understand their experiences and why their satisfaction is lower.



Tenants said they value having opportunities to shape services but want more information showing what has changed as a result of their feedback.

What will happen now the survey has finished?



We will...

Update the Tenant Satisfaction action plan using the feedback from this TALP meeting.



Continue focusing on areas where satisfaction is lower.



Strengthen our "You Said, We Did" updates so customers can see what has changed.



Tell customers more about Look Ahead's partnerships and community work.



Show customers how their feedback and involvement have influenced decision-making and services.

Breakout discussions

Tenants and staff split into three groups to discuss ways to improve customer satisfaction.

Each group shared their ideas and experiences with the full Panel.



Group One: Local Engagement
Customers said that having a good support worker can make a big difference.



However, when a support worker is away, customers do not always receive the same level of support.



Tenants said staff should:

- Communicate better with each other
- Share information about customers' needs
- Make sure support stays consistent, regardless of who is on duty



Key Working Sessions

Some tenants felt key-working sessions can feel like a tick-box exercise. They felt staff can sometimes focus too much on routine tasks such as rent, medication and paperwork.



Instead, tenants wanted key-working sessions to focus more on:

- personal goals
- ambitions
- progress
- practical support to help them achieve what matters to them



The group also heard a positive example of a staff member helping customers identify and work towards their personal goals.

Bank Staff



Tenants said that the support and communication they receive from bank staff is not always as consistent as it is from permanent staff.



Some customers felt bank staff spent too much time in service offices instead of engaging with customers.



The panel suggested that we review the induction and training given to bank staff.

Group Two: Complaints and Anti-social Behaviour

Tenants said it is important to get the right person involved as early as possible.



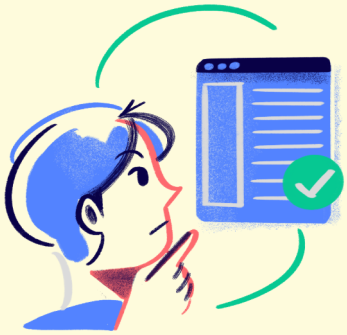
One tenant shared an example of a repair that needed several visits because the correct contractor was not sent the first time. They said this could lead to:

- Delays
- Frustration
- Complaints



Keeping customers informed

Tenants said they want clearer updates while waiting for repairs or other issues to be resolved.



Updates should explain:

- What is happening
- Who is responsible
- Expected timescales
- When they will receive another update



Tenants also said that an expected completion date should be given whenever possible.

This group also wanted better support to know their rights and responsibilities, and the routes available to them when an issue is unresolved.

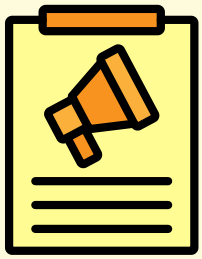


Building-wide communication

The group discussed a lift repair. Some residents had been told that a part needed replacing and understood why there was a delay. Other residents had not received the same information and became frustrated.



Customers said information should be shared consistently using:



- Letters
- Communal notices
- Community meetings

Communication should also take account of customers' individual needs, including:



- Language needs
- Literacy needs
- Accessibility and/or additional support needs

Group Three: Living Standards

Tenants discussed how living standards checks feel from a customer's perspective.



Some customers said these checks can sometimes feel clinical, intrusive and punitive.

Customers felt the checks should not feel like a pass-or-fail test. Instead, they should help customers:



- Improve wellbeing
- Develop daily living skills and build independence
- Recognise progress
- Identify areas where extra support is needed

Customers said staff should clearly explain:



- Why the checks take place
- Why living standards are important
- How the checks can support independence
- How the process can take account of individual circumstances

The group suggested that peer support could help new customers understand the standards and what they are designed to achieve.



Tenants also said feedback should be supportive, practical and encouraging rather than judgemental.

The group recognised that customers start from different situations and may need different levels of support, especially when living independently for the first time.



Next steps

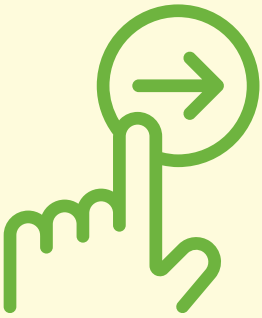
The Panel welcomed all of the feedback from customers and staff.

The ideas from the breakout groups will be used to refresh the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Action Plan.



The updated plan will:

- Return to TALP for discussion and approval.
- Show how customer feedback has been taken into account.
- Be presented to the Board once TALP has agreed it.



Other Business

Furniture Focus Group



At previous TALP meetings, we had discussed concerns about the furniture provided in customer rooms. These were that some furniture could feel:

- institutional
- uncomfortable
- not homely enough



Look Ahead planned to hold a customer focus group on Thursday 6 August 2026.



Tenants were invited to join the group to share their feedback and work with staff to develop plans for improving furniture standards

Several Panel members said they were interested in taking part.

Regulator of Social Housing

After the Panel meeting, tenants could choose to stay and speak with the Regulator of Social Housing observers.

Regulator of Social Housing

The observers wanted to hear about:

- customers' experience of the Panel meeting
- customers' wider involvement with Look Ahead
- Staying for this discussion was optional. Customers were free to leave if they wanted to.



Topics for the next TALP meeting

Tenants suggested the following topics:

- repairs and contractors
- customer Wi-Fi
- data protection
- evictions
- rent statements
- compliance and building safety

The ideas will be reviewed when planning the next TALP meeting on 22 October 2026.

The final topics will depend on customer priorities and the timing of other work taking place across Look Ahead.



Thank you to everyone who attended and shared their views.

Your feedback helps us improve services and ensures customer voices continue to influence decisions across Look Ahead.