

IT Focus Group Minutes

Held at Southgate House on 19th October 2009

Background

Phil and Lyn explained that the reason for holding the focus group was to provide an overview of the new GCH on-line services for tenants and to check whether these are easy to use and the information provided is clear and easy to understand. Tenants were advised of the time and resource investment into new technology in this financial year. This is all about GCH providing flexibility and alternative options for tenants to access information to assist them keep their accounts up to date.

In order to outline the new products available Phil used the “test system” to give an on-line demonstration and also provided a laptop for tenants to use to test the site for themselves.

Areas covered

Access to the service

This service is accessed via a link in the GCH website entitled “GCH Online Services for Tenants”

Security of Personal Information

Phil explained the security systems in place to ensure protection of individuals' information. The system is protected by a widely used internet protocol and demonstrated the options for changing personal information.

Registration and Log In

Phil demonstrated how to complete the initial registration and log in page and explained following this process tenants would then receive written confirmation of their log in details from GCH.

Tenants requiring assistance with initial registration could call in to Southgate House reception or Matson One Stop to be guided through the process by GCH staff.

Phil advised tenants could access their GCH account online 24 hours a day and view

- Rent account details for last 12 months – e.g. payments made, balances, HB or other benefits received
- Tenants who rent more than one property i.e. home and garage can access information relating to both properties.

Rent Information

Phil demonstrated and explained in some detail the information provided on the rent history screens

Comments from the group

- All tenants present thought this seemed a straightforward process.

- On the rent accounting history screen it could be confusing that credits are shown as a minus and debits as a positive. Most people are not qualified in accounts and would expect payments made to be shown as a plus (+) and payments owed as a minus (–)
- This looks brilliant for young/middle aged but the elderly may not use it as much , thinking particularly of the sheltered housing scheme residents

Questions from the group

Q. Is this accessible from any computer?

A. Yes. The system is compatible with any internet browsers anyone may use

Q. Is there an automatic time out?

A. Not at present but we could look at incorporating this

Q. When is internet connection going to be available in Clapham court residents lounge?

A. We have signed a contract with a company to provide internet services plus a new computer for the residents lounge . Phil will make further inquiries regarding time scale for installation.

Q. What about payments on line – can this be done on this system by tenants?

A. Paying on line currently launches the Gloucester.gov.uk on line payments system – this is the city council’s payments system which is not in our control. GCH can pass on your suggestions to the city council for consideration. Phil said it may be possible to incorporate an email acknowledgement of rent payments made within the GCH online system

The group were thanked for attending the focus group and for their valuable input and also for their comments and questions raised.

Lyn Scudamore

Resident Involvement Officer