

## **NATIONAL CODES OF STANDARDS VERIFICATION PROCEDURES: INFORMATION FOR ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS**

### **BEFORE THE VISIT**

- 1) You will be assigned a verifier to conduct your visit/s, who will make contact with whoever you appoint as the appropriate member/s of staff (also known as the Nominated Contact) for such visits in order to arrange a suitable date and time for the verification to take place.
- 2) The verifier will schedule the visit to take place not less than 10 working days from the date of the first contact with the Nominated Contact.
- 3) The verifier will stipulate where within the development/s they wish to visit and will discuss with the provider the arrangements for getting access to rooms/flats and the tenants within those developments.
- 4) The verifier will stipulate what documentation they wish to examine during the visit, and will expect this to be available either on site during the visit OR provided to them in advance of the visit taking place. Although the verifier's decision as to what they will wish to look at will be determined in part by their analysis of your self-assessment return, it is likely that they will ask to look at the following:
  - Welcome pack
  - Equality and Diversity Policies
  - Booking fee information
  - Copy of accommodation inventory pro-forma
  - List of staff contact details for student residents
  - Copy of a job description of a member of staff (an example) involved in managing the accommodation (to assess whether it takes account of the needs of dealing with students)
  - Information on any training courses that members of staff attend (e.g. aims and objectives and list of staff who have attended the training)
  - Procedure manual(s) – if used - whether on-line or in folder
  - Procedures for dealing with emergency situations (e.g. flood, power failures, infectious disease e.g. pandemic flu, or meningitis)
  - Mail delivery and distribution procedures
  - Fire safety drill procedure and records
  - Emergency and Disaster Management Plan
  - Security Plan & advice to students
  - Energy efficiency advice to residents
  - Gas safety certificate(s)
  - Electrical Periodic Inspection Report
  - Fire alarm system inspection, testing certificate and log book
  - Emergency lighting system inspection & testing certificate
  - Lift maintenance logs and emergency procedures (where appropriate)
  - Waste storage and collection plan
  - Tenancy agreement/contract
  - Evidence that deposits have been protected (where relevant)

- Complaints reporting & dispute resolution procedure
- Advice to local residents about the Code of Standards local residents complaints procedure (and information relating to neighbourhood and being good neighbours)
- The most recent tenants' satisfaction survey form and results
- Any other documentation that is used as part of a quality management system
- Details of when they were last visited by the relevant local authority.

5) Once a date for a verification visit has been agreed between a provider and the verifier, five working days' notice will be required for any cancellation or postponement of that visit by the provider. A fixed cancellation fee will be charged in situations where the requisite notice is not given.

6) The verifier will expect the staff who are to be involved directly with the verification visit to have had sight of the provider's self-assessment questionnaire response.

### DURING THE VISIT

1) The verifier will wish to look in a number of bedrooms/flats, arrangements for which will have been discussed with the provider in advance. This could include a selection of rooms chosen by the provider themselves, either in advance or on the day of the visit.

2) The verifier will also want to talk to some of the current tenants in order to gain from them an understanding of their experiences of living in the development/s. The verifier may stipulate in advance of the visit specific arrangements they would wish you to make to facilitate these discussions, or they may decide to interview tenants as they conduct their tour. Development staff (and any other staff associated with the development who accompany the verifier on the visit) are advised to withdraw at this stage.

3) At the end of the visit the verifier will brief relevant staff on their findings and highlight any action points that have been identified. Providers may invite relevant managers from other developments within their portfolio to attend such briefings.

### AFTER THE VISIT

1) The verifier completes their draft report and submits this online, at which point the person registered as the contact for the provider for that visit will receive an email confirming this, with a request that they review the draft report for any factual errors/points of disagreement. The provider will acknowledge receipt, in writing, within 14 days of it being sent. The verifier will notify the NCA if they do not receive an acknowledgement within that time.

2) Where no amendments are required, the provider will either select the 'accept all' option on the online review document OR will go through the document selecting the 'accept' option for each of the responses. The provider will make their online response to the verifier within 28 days of the visit taking place.

3) Where a provider wishes to alter or dispute a matter contained within a report, they will choose the dispute option for each of the relevant sections contained within the review document and make clear what they wish to be changed and why.

4) Once the reviewed report has been submitted, the verifier will decide whether they wish to alter the report accordingly or not. Where they agree to do so then they will have the option to submit a surpassed verification report, which the provider will then need to review (once submitted) in the same way as in step 2 (above). Where they do NOT accept the changes then the verifier has the option to record the matter as being disputed, in which case the National Codes Administrator (NCA) will notify the Audit Panel.

5) A final report will be issued automatically as soon as the NCA has been notified by the verifier that the reviewed report or the surpassed report has been accepted by the provider.

6) The Audit Panel will discuss all final verification reports (and any draft ones referred to them), along with the recommendations made by the verifier in each case, and decide on whether or not to accept these. Each verifier will compile a written report for each meeting of the Audit Panel, detailing all visits and re-visits undertaken along with the outcomes and details of responses received from the provider.

7) The NCA will contact all providers of developments visited that the Audit Panel discusses at its meetings, to detail all decisions taken in respect of them.