

15 July 2021

Mr Greg Piper MP
Legislative Assembly
Public Accounts Committee
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia

Dear Mr Piper

Public Accounts Committee Follow-up Review of the Management of NSW Public Housing Maintenance Contracts

Further to Ventia's appearance before the Public Accounts Committee on 21 June 2021, we note receipt of supplementary questions from the Committee on 01 July 2021. Answers to those questions are provided below.

Home Modifications

How do you differentiate between what can be covered by general maintenance and what work requires home modification?

The AMS Contract defines and delineates all work programs. Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) advise the requirements for home modifications which is described as "Disability Modifications" in the AMS Contract.

What is the budget for home modifications and what does it cover? Does the budget include this as part of the Public Housing Maintenance Contract?

Ventia are not privy to the home modification budget.

What is the process and timeframe for home modifications starting with the tenant request through to completion of the work? How does the head contractor assist in the home modification process?

Ventia works collaboratively to provide tenant centric home modifications at the request of LAHC. LAHC advise the requirements for each modification direct to the Ventia operations team. Any relevant documentation, such as Occupational Therapist reports, are also provided with the initial work request. Within 3 business days, Ventia provide a scope of work and quotation to LAHC. In the case of minor modifications, works are completed within 3 business days. All other modifications are completed within 12 business days.

Works are conducted in accordance with the instructions of each particular work request. Ventia supervisors liaise with the tenant, counterparts in local LAHC Offices and with Occupational Therapists as needed to ensure that tenant needs are addressed.

Post-work inspections are undertaken by Ventia supervisors in line with our risk-based compliance inspection program.

What problems have you encountered with the home modification process and what are some of the constraints that you face in addressing tenants' needs?

Properties are not always able to be modified in accordance with specialist advice. For example, sloping land may make it difficult to fit a ramp, or bathrooms of a certain size may not accommodate modifications. In these cases, alternative modifications may be investigated, or LAHC may make an assessment to relocate the tenant to a more suitable property.

Is the home modification work assessed as part of the head contractor's KPIs? If so, is the performance of home modification work included in the pain/ gain share model?

The KPIs are broad and span all work programs, including home modifications. Salient elements of maintenance service delivery, such as timeliness and quality, are monitored through regular reporting and governance forums.

Review of previous maintenance work provided

What is Ventia's experience with the Compliance, Audit and Verification teams? How often do they perform checks on your works? Do you regularly encounter any specific issues with the Teams?

Ventia has regular engagement with the LAHC Compliance, Audit and Verification Teams at both the operational and contract governance levels. Ventia approaches these relationships with collaboration and welcomes constructive feedback in an effort to continually improve service delivery and ultimately Tenant outcomes.

At the operational level, the LAHC Compliance team carry out joint inspections with Ventia Supervisors in addition to their independent compliance inspections. Joint inspections are conducted in an effort of continuous improvement and to better understand and problem solve any issues identified. The LAHC Compliance Manager is in regular communication with the Ventia Quality Manager to provide oversight of the teams engagement.

In relation to contract governance, the LAHC Audit and Verification team conduct routine audits in line with Contract requirements. These audits are comprehensive, professional, include senior staff from both organisations and are managed to the audit scope. Where non-conformances are raised Ventia work with LAHC to resolve in a timely and efficient manner. Audit findings are reviewed by both organisation's senior management.

What is your experience in dealing with LAHC internal teams, do you consider they are helpful and responsive to your queries in a timely manner?

The working relationship with LAHC internal teams is collaborative, involves responsive dialogue and evinces a joint commitment to continuous improvement. Our relationship is built on mutual respect, transparency and a focus on delivering the contract objectives.

At multiple levels of operations, Ventia staff have direct LAHC counterparts with whom they liaise daily. Operationally, Ventia trade supervisors and quality advisors meet with LAHC compliance inspection officers to conduct joint site inspections. At the strategic level, managers from each organisation interface to discuss performance trends.

On the whole, the teams share the common goal of timely and informed decision making to deliver tenant centric services in alignment with the contract and its objectives. The continued evolution of working relationships between the teams is mirrored in KPI performance, which has trended upwards over time.

Contract Conditions

What is the definition of a safe and liveable standard for tenant housing or habitable property? Is this specified in the contract?

The contract includes asset performance standards, which detail criteria for the performance and design aspects of property assets. This is underpinned by the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW) and the need to ensure that all LAHC properties are maintained in accordance with the standards detailed in the Act.

What is the difference between safe and habitable housing and fit for purpose housing?

Safe and habitable housing reflects a fundamental and non-negotiable service delivery standard. Fit for purpose housing invokes concepts which inform strategic decision making at the LAHC portfolio level, a pertinent example being The NSW Land and Housing Corporation Portfolio Strategy 2020.

What measures or requirements are in place to ensure that subcontractors maintain a property to a safe and liveable standard? Once works have been completed, how often is the quality of work reviewed and are inspections documented?

During the onboarding process, subcontractors undergo a comprehensive induction process which is reinforced by back-to-back contracting arrangements. This ensures common understanding of the required service performance standards, consistency in service delivery outputs and commitment to our Health, Safety and Quality Standards.

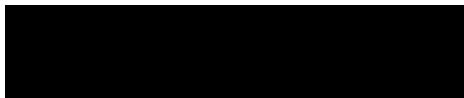
Ventia have a dedicated Quality Management team made up of quality professionals who undertake audits and inspections. During the operational lifecycle, Ventia conducts regular inspections on each work program translating to over 5800 inspections per month. Ventia's program of compliance inspections reflect representative samples across geographies, work types and trade types, and is risk-based to ensure that emphasis and oversight is directed in the most appropriate way.

In addition to joint inspections with LAHC staff, Ventia Operational teams validate the works completed on site through the use of a mobile form application, which captures photographic evidence, date and time stamp for quality control and for defect management. The data is reviewed and analysed for trends, resulting in the ability to develop targeted quality inspection regimes.

Any defective works result in the subcontractor being recalled to remedy the works. Repeat issues are monitored through our subcontractor management team to work with the subcontractor to improve if so required.

We trust this addresses the supplementary questions and will further assist the Public Accounts Committee with their review.

Yours sincerely



IAN RYLES
Project Director