



CUSTOMER SCRUTINY REPORT – REPAIRS COMMUNICATION

The Committee received a report, presented by a customer, from a recent Customer Scrutiny Group exercise focusing on how we communicate with customers about repairs to their properties.

It was recognised that the timing of this review was difficult, whilst major projects such as the roll out of TotalMobile, our new repairs system, was still ongoing. Improvements will be seen when TotalMobile goes live. For example, it will make it easier to identify and communicate customer vulnerabilities to front line teams. It was recognised that it can be frustrating for customers when they share information with one team, and this isn't shared with other teams they interact with.

The Customer Scrutiny Group will continue to review this report every six months, which will allow for the impacts of TotalMobile to be considered.

There are currently 10 members of the CSG, with further recruitment planned, and the differing approach being tested allowed for customers to be engaged in different ways that suit them.

FRAUD AND CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS

At the request of the Audit, Risk, and Assurance Committee, officers considered a variety of options around increasing fraud and cyber-security awareness amongst our customers. The Committee were told that the decision had been made to provide general guidance and signpost to specialist sources. The campaign should roll out by the end of June 2024.

PERFORMANCE AND SATISFACTION REPORT

The Committee received the quarterly Performance and Satisfaction Report. It was noted that each Committee going forward will have a basket of Key Performance Indicators that it is responsible for monitoring, reporting will change at the next meeting to focus more on highlighting trends. There was one KPI out of target this quarter, however it was noted that we had limited control over this as we cannot always control over whether we can access properties.

This was the first meeting to receive transactional survey results from our new provider, and it was noted that there has been an improving in the quality of the data and the level of insight which is already proving beneficial. It was positive to see an increase in overall satisfaction, within the context of a significant drop in this measure nationally.

There had been a decrease in satisfaction around home safety, although these results tended to be around things such as anti-social behaviour and fire doors being left open, rather than the safety of the buildings themselves. Work is ongoing to address these concerns, such as a zero-tolerance approach in communal areas.

It was noted that there had been a decrease in satisfaction around complaint handling, which could be expected with changes to how complaints are managed, and there was a discussion around what could be done to manage challenges with what is and isn't perceived as a complaint by customers.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures Annual Report will be published at the end of June 2024 by the Regulator of Social Housing, and will also be published on the GCH website.

The Committee discussed concerns around the number of properties that we have been unable to access, and therefore couldn't conduct Stock Condition Surveys on. Conversations are taking place on how we may be able to improve this by emphasising the benefits customers may see as a result.

It was noted that, despite the rent increase, the number of customers in rent arrears continued to decrease. A contributing factor to this is the continued work by the Tenancy Sustainment Team.

The Committee were told that an increase in domestic abuse cases is likely a result of improved reporting mechanisms, alongside increasing awareness, rather than an increase in abuse itself. Training has been carried out for colleagues with positive feedback and we're looking to continue to expand on this.

QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Committee received the quarterly Complaints Report. An update was provided on a case with the Housing Ombudsman where they found no maladministration. It was recognised that it had been a tough year in terms of complaints, with changing standards and perceptions, but that we'd developed a clear depth of understanding.

There was agreement that, for a lot of people, feeling heard and respected can matter more than the resolution of the complaint itself, and therefore it's important to involve the customer and develop an understanding of what they want to come out of the process.

A business case has been approved to expand the Customer Satisfaction Team to meet increasing pressures on them, with recruitment starting next month. It is clear that contact with the Housing Ombudsman is increasing which requires a lot of work, but the checklists and processes mean we have the information available.

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ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Committee were reviewed the Annual Complaints Report, noting that the end of June would be the first time this is submitted to the Housing Ombudsman.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion data gathered from customers is going to be a key part of improving going forward, and Acuity are currently predicted a response rate between 55-70% on these surveys. We are also incorporating work on this project with work at other touchpoint with customers.

The Committee approved the Annual Complaints Report

COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Committee received the Self-Assessment against the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, and this is the first time that evidence of compliance is being required by the Ombudsman. We believe we are fully compliant with the Code.

We are confident that we will be able to comply with the timescales required by the Code, and the processes in place such as standardised conversation templates allow for authentic communication whilst ensuring all bases are still covered. Regular quality assurance monitoring is carried out by the Customer Experience Team.

A discussion followed around access to the Complaints Policy, ensuring that it can be readily accessed by those who aren't digital first. The Committee were assured that levels of digital literacy will be included in the customer data project.

The Committee approved the Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, subject to the agreed amendments.

NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AUDIT OF COMPLAINTS

The Chairs of the GCH Board and the Customer Experience Committee reviewed a random sample of complaints with the Customer Satisfaction Team. They found that this was a useful exercise in providing assurance, and their feedback was welcomed with some suggestions already initiated. This will be opened up to other Board and Committee Members in due course.

SAFEGUARDING AND ASB REPORT

The Committee received the quarterly Safeguarding and Anti-Social Behaviour Report. There was a discussion around repeat offending, and colleagues are doing work around perpetrator management, we do signpost them to support but don't provide direct support beyond housing services.

OTHER MATTERS

The meeting concluded with a review of the Committee's Forward Plan.

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