

Customer Service Review

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report has been written to outline the findings of a review of Waverley's Customer Service. The service provides customer contact through:

- Telephone - all calls should be answered within 5 rings (calls made out-of-hours have the facility to request a call back within 24 hours)
- Email – email enquiries should be answered within 24 hours of opening
- Online website – enquiries should be answered within 24 hours of opening
- Calling in to their office
- Letter – letters should be answered within 5 working days

Waverley Housing have set criteria within their Customer Service Standards on the level of service provided. This includes the time taken to respond, politeness and knowledge of staff and if a callback is requested or required this was done in a timely fashion.

2 BACKGROUND (WHO CUSTOMER REVIEW PANEL ARE)

In April 2014, a group of tenants met as a focus group with Waverley Housing to give views and comments on the development of a new Tenants' Handbook and Website, as part of the Waverley Housing re-brand. Interest in other areas of the company grew and the focus group took on the name Customer Review Panel.

Some of the members attended training on 'tenant scrutiny' and 'mystery shopping', delivered to tenants, staff and Board members in March 2015 by Lynda Johnstone, Tenants Information Service.

3 SCRUTINY AND WHAT THE GROUP'S AIMS ARE, WHAT THE PROJECT WAS

Landlords and tenants must start their tenant scrutiny process by agreeing how tenants can be involved in the different scrutiny activities to be developed. Tenant involvement in the scrutiny of a landlord's performance is rooted in the principle that landlords understand:

- Tenants' priorities and needs
- Involving tenants in setting policies and standards
- Taking tenants' views into account before decisions are taken
- How to support tenants to hold their landlords to account

Tenant scrutiny is more than just another tenant participation activity. It is a way of giving tenants greater influence and ability to hold their landlords to account, by exercising more power over the

business decisions, governance and performance of their landlord. Tenant scrutiny gives tenants an active stake in the running of their landlord's business rather than being the passive recipient of services. It enables staff and tenants to work in partnership to achieve better performance and improved outcomes.

4 METHOD (HOW YOU HAVE GONE ABOUT THE MYSTERY SHOP)

Each member of the panel has contacted Waverley Customer Service by the above methods to either:

- Report a repair
- Request information on applying for a property
- Make a complaint
- Enquire about transferring to a property in a different area
- Request paperwork on purchasing house
- To speak to a specific member of staff

Each member of the panel kept a record of their findings and these were then collated to get a general overview of the responses received.

A total of 10 contacts were made of which 6 were by telephone calls, 2 by email and 1 each of online contact and an office visit,

One of the emails was out with working hours and one of the telephone calls required a callback from another member of staff who was not available at the time of calling.

5 FINDINGS (A SUMMARY OF YOUR FINDINGS)

A review of the records has showed the following results:

Telephone calls – all calls were answered within the 5 rings guaranteed in Waverley's set criteria however on no occasion did the representative give their name though they were all polite and very helpful.

Emails – A receipt email was received by return and a response within 24 hours unless it was a weekend, the response email was written in an informal manner.

Online – You have the option of sending an email through the website or using the online chat during working hours. On one occasion an email was sent and a response received within the correct timescale. There is also an online form (House Call system) that can be used to report a repair. Recording a report was not found to be user friendly, as it was unclear which fields were mandatory.

Visit to office – The office is open Monday to Friday and the first point of contact is with the receptionist who will then contact the required member of staff or take a message. Staff member was not available to give information on Right to Buy and form not offered. A call back was promised but not received.

Though the initial responses were good it was felt that the information required was not always available on first contact and subsequent follow up calls not received in a reasonable timescale.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS (WHAT CRP ARE PROPOSING TO BE IMPROVED, CHANGED ETC AS A RESULT OF THE MYSTERY SHOP)

Based on the Review Panels findings listed above the recommendations are:

1. Emails to be more formal in their address (titles and surnames rather than Christian names)
2. Staff to answer all calls by a greeting and then giving their name (this allows any follow up calls to be dealt with quicker and can also be useful to either commend a service or raise a complaint).
3. Online House Call log form to be made clearer (an explanation of required information before filling in the form).
4. When a call back is required the initial call could be logged and a follow up made to ensure the call back has been made.
5. Information on Right to Buy made more available with easier access to the forms.
6. Staff recognition policy could be implemented to commend anyone who has given good service (employee of the month with names on a notice board).
7. Check all available information is correct and up to date.