

Tenant Scrutiny Review- Improving Communication with Tenants

This review and action plan supports service delivery against the following **Regulator of Social Housing – Tenant Satisfaction Measures:**

TP01	Overall satisfaction
TP06	Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenants' views and acts upon them.
TP07	Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them.
TP08	Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect.

This review and action plan also support service delivery against the following **Tenant Engagement Framework 2022-25** outcomes:

Outcome 1	Putting our customers at the heart of everything we do.
Outcome 2	Delivering a range of options to give all our tenants an opportunity to get involved.
Outcome 4	Enable tenants to scrutinise and challenge our performance by providing open, transparent, and accessible information.

Recommendation (in priority order)	Lead Officers	Actions	Target Date	Update
<p>Recommendation A: Letters</p> <p>Continue to work through Council letters to make sure that they are understandable and written in plain language for all residents.</p> <p>Have a mechanism in place to review the letter templates with customers.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p>	<p>Tenant Involvement Coordinator</p> <p>Housing Heads of Service</p> <p>Head of Customer Services</p> <p>Rotherfed</p>	<p>Establish a Tenant Communications Group.</p> <p>Develop a forward work programme to review letters, documents and Home Matters.</p> <p>All letters will be reviewed to ensure they are understandable, relevant,</p>	<p>June 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p> <p>July 2023</p>	<p>Housing Services letters were last reviewed in September 2021 prior to implementation of the NEC system.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication with tenants. • Digitalisation of services. • Improved customer satisfaction. • Enhanced engagement with tenants. • Customer easy read and input. 	<p>Communications and Marketing Manager</p>	<p>thoughtful with an appropriate and suitable tone.</p>		
<p>Recommendation B: Strategy</p> <p>Provide an over-arching strategy on how the Council communicates with people living in Rotherham.</p> <p>Inform tenants how Council officers will communicate/ consult with them.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication with tenants. • Digitalisation of services. • Improved customer satisfaction. <p>Recommendation B: Strategy cont.</p>	<p>Communications and Marketing Manager</p> <p>Tenant Involvement Coordinator</p>	<p>Provide information detailing how the Council will communicate, engage, and consult with tenants.</p> <p>Ensure that tenant communication and engagement principles are embedded within all staff across the Housing Service.</p> <p>Develop a forward communication plan to be regularly reviewed by the proposed Tenant Communications Group and Housing Involvement Panel.</p>	<p>December 2022</p> <p>June-December 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p>	<p>The Tenant Engagement Framework provides details of how the Council will communicate, engage, and consult with tenants.</p> <p>Customer Access Strategy and Digital Strategy in place which set out how customers can access council services and what information is available to customers in a digital format.</p> <p>Consultation and Engagement Framework sets out guidelines for Council staff to follow when undertaking any type of public consultation and engagement activity.</p> <p>Housing training programme is being developed for roll out from June 2023.</p>
<p>Recommendation C: Complaints and Compliments</p>	<p>Customer Services Manager</p>	<p>Provide a direct link from the housing webpage to the Complaints contact us</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>The current web page can be navigated by selecting 'contact us' at the bottom of the webpage which</p>

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<p>Provide a link tile on the web page to allow people to find information on how to make a complaint/ comment or pay a compliment.</p> <p>Include reassurance on the linked page that it is useful to receive feedback and that there will not be repercussions from making a complaint.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased feedback from customers to improve and shape services to meet customer needs. • Improved communication with tenants. • Improved website. 	<p>Complaints Manager</p>	<p>page.</p> <p>The following sentence is to be added to the complaint webpage ‘please be assured that making a formal complaint will not affect the services you are entitled to, that are the subject of your complaint’.</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>then provides a list of contact options including ‘make a complaint, comment or suggestion’</p> <p>A housing specific contact tile on the housing web page will be developed which links directly to the contact us page.</p> <p>Reassurance about making a complaint is included on complaint acknowledgement letters.</p>
<p>Recommendation D: Website</p> <p>Consider the accessibility of the website by having links at the top of the home page to allow people to adjust the settings to their needs (perhaps similar to Berneslai and Wolverhampton).</p> <p>Check and change text on the website that uses acronyms or jargon</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication with tenants. • Improved website. • Website is more accessible for customers • Customer easy read and input. 	<p>Head of Customer Services</p> <p>Housing Heads of Service</p> <p>Communications and Marketing Manager</p>	<p>Review the content of the housing webpages with the Tenant Communications Group, to ensure language is clear and understandable including removing any acronyms.</p>	<p>September 2023</p>	<p>The bar at the bottom of the webpage has an accessibility link. The accessibility statement advises customers of what they can expect on the website, how they can make use of supportive technology to improve their own experience, and signpost people to other support formats if needed. This includes an option to change colours, language translation, zoom in to 300%, navigate using a keyboard or speech recognition software and listen using a screen reader.</p> <p>Before information is published online it goes through a number of accessibility checks and is</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digitalisation of services 				<p>assessed against our agreed website style and standards.</p> <p>A review of the housing webpages will be undertaken to check languages and acronyms and amend accordingly.</p> <p>15125 customers are signed up to housing online to self-serve.</p>
<p>Recommendation E: Newsletter accessibility</p> <p>Improve the accessibility of the newsletter (Home Matters) for all customers by offering the newsletter in other formats e.g. easy read, other languages.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved accessibility Ensuring communications available to all tenants 	<p>Tenant Involvement Coordinator</p> <p>Communications and Marketing Manager</p>	<p>Establish a Tenant Communications Group.</p> <p>Housing Senior Management Team and Communications to review the content and purpose of the Home Matters magazine.</p> <p>Review the existing Home Matters with the Tenant Communications Group.</p> <p>Agree a programme of work with the Group, to enable the Group to shape and influence content in future editions.</p> <p>Ensure that the Home Matters magazine is available in other formats including other languages, large font, speech</p>	<p>June 2023</p> <p>February 2023</p> <p>July 2023</p> <p>July 2023</p> <p>July 2023</p>	<p>Meeting with Communications and Housing Senior Management Team on 10th February for an initial discussion and to agree a review of the content for the magazine. The written content of the magazine can be extracted in HTML format for publishing on the website. The website then enables translation into other languages and formats through the accessibility function on the website.</p>

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		recognition etc.		
<p>Recommendation F: Telephone calls</p> <p>Review the new telephone system and make sure that the target of six minutes to speak to a real person is being met. Ensure that robust measurement is in place to monitor this target and respond to shortfalls going forward.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved customer satisfaction • Improved access to services. • Digitalisation of services • Efficiencies and use of resources. 	Customer Services Manager	<p>Review the telephone system and response times.</p> <p>Promote and embed customer service standards.</p> <p>Promote self-serve capabilities through Housing Online, to provide choice of service access routes.</p> <p>Provide periodic performance data to the Housing Involvement Panel.</p>	<p>March 2024</p> <p>March 2024</p> <p>September 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p>	<p>This is a Council Key performance indicator – progress against the target is monitored and reported on each quarter.</p> <p>Various improvements implemented such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of staff able to deal with Housing enquiries through ongoing recruitment and training has increased • Customer call back facility during periods of high call demand now offered and exploring other technical solutions to improve call waiting times <p>Action plan in place to ensure progress against the target and resultant improvements are delivered.</p> <p>Customer Experience Programme Board is overseeing a programme of work to improve customer services which includes developing customer standards.</p>
<p>Recommendation G: Complaints and Compliments</p> <p>Consider running an 'It's OK to complain'</p>	Complaints Manager	Provide a direct link from the housing webpage to the Complaints page.	March 2023.	Information provided in all editions of Home Matters about how to complain / pay a compliment.

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<p>campaign to encourage more feedback from tenants</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers know when to use the complaints procedure and the benefits for doing so. • Improved services shaped to meet customer needs. • Improved customer experience and journey 				<p>Quarterly attendance by the Complaints Manager at Housing Involvement Panel meetings to talk about complaints received and also Learning from Complaints.</p> <p>Housing Senior Management Team have established a periodic meeting to discuss learning from complaints and associated service improvements.</p>
<p>Recommendation H: Newsletter circulation</p> <p>Improve the publicity and access to the ward e-newsletters. Conduct a consultation exercise to find out if tenants still like to receive their newsletter (Home Matters) by post or if they would prefer it by email.</p> <p>Possibly design a hybrid model to meet customer needs</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient model & Distribution plan developed based on results of consultation. 	<p>Tenant Involvement Coordinator</p> <p>Communications and Marketing Manager</p> <p>Senior Communications Officer</p>	<p>Review the integration between the Tenant Involvement webpages and Ward e-newsletters.</p> <p>Review tenant communications requirements and ensure that information is being sent to tenants in a format that they require.</p>	<p>June 2023</p> <p>July 2023</p>	<p>Ward e-newsletter publicised via social media and sign up to the council website.</p>
<p>Recommendation I: Staff training</p> <p>Work closely with Rotherham Federation representatives to develop training courses on communications/ customer care (This could include videos of tenant feedback/ tenant</p>	<p>Learning and Development Manager</p> <p>Tenant Involvement</p>	<p>Training course on customer service to be developed which includes case studies/soundbites from tenants.</p>	<p>June 2023</p>	<p>The Learning and Development Officer is producing a 3-hour Train the Trainer Communications Skills Course which supports a 1.5-2 hour Communication Skills Course</p>

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<p>representative attendance/ listening to customer call recordings)</p> <p>Improve the handling of bereavement conversations by incorporating into training courses/ providing staff guidance.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are skilled in holding conversations where customers are experiencing grief and loss. • Reduction in related complaints • Enhanced customer service and understanding of customer needs 	<p>Coordinator Rotherfed</p>	<p>Comprehensive housing training programme to be delivered which includes customer service and bereavement conversations.</p> <p>The following sentence is to be added to the complaint webpage 'please be assured that making a formal complaint will not affect the services you are entitled to, that are the subject of your complaint'.</p>	<p>June 2023- March 2024</p>	<p>for delivery to front line Housing Services officers by team managers. Training planning discussions have been held with Rotherham Federation representatives to include tenants.</p> <p>Housing Services have carried out a full-scale Learning Needs Analysis Activity leading to the production of a training plan. Bereavement support is embedded within this plan.</p>
<p>Tenant Communications Working Group</p> <p>Once the website development has commenced and customer advice/ testing is required, it may be useful to set up a temporary working group involving officers and tenant representatives.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants voice in communications • Communications shaped to meet customer needs • Enhanced customer services 	<p>Tenant Involvement Coordinator Rotherfed</p>	<p>Establish a Terms of Reference detailing the purpose of the group and format of the meetings.</p> <p>Stimulate interest from tenant representatives.</p> <p>Establish a Tenants Communications Group.</p>	<p>April 2023</p> <p>April 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p>	<p>Initial discussion at Housing Involvement Panel in January 2023.</p>
<p>Tenants Home Matters Editorial board</p> <p>Consider resurrecting the Home Matters Editorial Board and looking to increase</p>	<p>Tenant Involvement Coordinator</p>	<p>Home Matters Editorial Board to be embedded within the Tenant Communications Working</p>	<p>June 2023</p>	<p>This links to the above action, the editorial board should be included</p>

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<p>publication of tenants' voice/stories.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants voice in communications • Communications shaped to meet customer needs • Enhanced customer services 	<p>Rotherfed</p>	<p>Group.</p> <p>Review the content of the Home Matters magazine to include more tenants case studies/soundbites.</p>	<p>July 2023</p>	<p>in the Tenant Communications Working Group.</p>
<p>Home Matters look</p> <p>Consider making the front page less cluttered.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <p>Improved home matters magazine to meet customer needs</p>	<p>Communications and Marketing Manager</p>	<p>Review design of the Home Matters magazine.</p>	<p>July 2023</p>	<p>Home Matters is due for a general review around format, frequency and content and the design element will be considered at that point – aiming for early 2023 subject to approval from the Housing Senior Management Team and the cabinet member</p>
<p>Surveys</p> <p>Consider the use of more online and telephone surveys to consult and communicate with tenants.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement and customer feedback • Services shaped to meet customer needs • Improved customer journey and satisfaction • Tenants voice representative of borough wide demographics • Meeting the requirements of the Social 	<p>Tenant Involvement Coordinator</p>	<p>Implement Tenant Engagement Framework action plan.</p> <p>Tender Tenant Perception Survey</p> <p>Undertake Tenant Perception Survey.</p>	<p>November 2022- May 2024</p> <p>March 2023</p> <p>July 2023</p>	<p>As part of the new Tenant Engagement Framework, an Online Survey tool will be developed for tenants who cannot attend meetings to feedback on services and polices.</p> <p>For the new Tenants Perception Survey, we will be considering telephone and online options as part of the methodology.</p>

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Housing White Paper.				
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