

CITY BOARD
24 OCTOBER 2013

REVIEW OF CUSTOMER SERVICE WITHIN DERBY HOMES

Report of the Tenant Panel

1. SUMMARY

This report is to look at the levels of Customer Service provided by Derby Homes, in addition to presenting recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATION

1. To note and comment on the information as detailed in appendix 1
2. To consider the recommendations in paragraph 3.7.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 As Derby Homes holds the Customer Service Excellence accreditation, the Tenant Panel wanted to ensure that standards throughout the organisation are being maintained, especially with the current review of services. The Tenant Panel wanted to make sure that the levels of Customer Service are consistent, regardless of department, they also wanted to see how staff interact with customers. The review was carried out over a 3 month period from July to September 2013. Full details can be found in appendix 1.
- 3.2 During the review period the Tenant Panel visited all five local housing offices, held a meeting with managers from different departments including Local Housing Office, Voids, Enquiry Centre, ASB, Customer Service, Communications and Marketing. Due to unforeseen circumstances Managers from the Repairs Team could not attend.
- 3.3 In most areas the Tenant Panel found that Derby Homes was customer focused.
- 3.4 The Panel also carried out a small sample of repairs satisfaction surveys by telephone, visited the Enquiry Centres at both the Council House and London Road and met with Resident Involvement team.
- 3.5 Areas which the panel found need attention are:
 - Reception greeting at the Council House – It was felt that the greeting was sometimes brusque and not welcoming. On this occasion this was the Derby Homes booth. Instead of being asked if they could be of help, the officer simply said ‘take a ticket’ before establishing if this was what was needed or redirection to somewhere else.

- IT equipment in enquiry centres slow. The panel felt that Enquiry Centre staff were hindered by slow running systems especially when they need to consult different consoles, i.e Academy, Optitime, paye.net, Datasquirt, Abritas, Outlook and Word. We observed slow running times on Academy, this can make the call frustrating both for the customer and the member of staff as this used in the main for most enquiries.
- Enquiry centre staff found some resistance from housing officers to take calls. The panel understand that housing officers are encouraged to be out on the estates more than they are in the office, so this may not be possible.
- Repairs on the dashboard show as completed when the job is still ongoing - Customers expressed their dissatisfaction with this.

3.6 Conclusion

The panel found that overall Derby Homes is customer focused, that staff are committed and fully aware of the standards required of them. All staff are required to attend compulsory Customer Service training to ensure they are fully up to date with their skills.

Staff work hard and to the best of their ability but feel let down by slow IT systems available to them.

On speaking to customers we found that there is a high level of satisfaction in relation to customer service. They also stated that they were more satisfied when a repair was carried out by Derby Home's staff rather than a contractor.

3.7 Recommendations

1. IT equipment in enquiry centres slow

Investigate the possibility of an enhanced system to enable Enquiry Centre staff to access and record more detailed information. We feel this is necessary if the Enquiry Centre is to function efficiently as a 'one stop shop'. The main area of concern is the speed of Academy, as waiting time seems to have increased from previous visits, this causes frustration to both the customer and the member of staff.

2. Enquiry centre staff found some resistance from housing officers to take calls.

The panel understand that housing officers are encouraged to be out on the estates more than they are in the office, so it may not be possible for the housing officer to take a call immediately. However, we feel that an email to the Housing Officer giving details of the query, with a proposed timescale for contacting the customer would be a step forward. This would ensure that both customer and housing officer are aware of expected timescales for response.

3. Repairs may be seen as completed on the dashboard but may not actually be finished.

Investigate allowing the word 'pending' rather than 'completed' to show on dashboard if a repair is ongoing.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Consultation
Financial and Business Plan
Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Risk
Policy Review

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author.

Author: Gill Young, Lyn Gadsby, Harry Margett, Bob MacDonald, Arthur Baba, Fran Eyre

Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None

TENANT PANEL REPORT



ABOUT THE PANEL

The panel was brought together in April 2012 by inviting people from tenant involvement groups already in existence. The following are the current members:

Gill Young	Chair
Bob MacDonald	Vice Chair
Arthur Baba	
Harry Margett	
Lyn Gadsby	
Fran Eyre	
Keith Merry	

1st Review of 2013 – Customer Service Throughout Derby Homes

The purpose of this review was to look at the levels of Customer Service throughout the services provided by Derby Homes. The review was carried out over a 3 month period from July to September.

As Derby Homes hold the Customer Service Excellence accreditation we wanted to ensure that standards throughout the organisation are being maintained.

The Tenant Panel wanted to make sure that the levels of Customer Service are consistent, regardless of department, we also wanted to see how staff interact with customers.

In most areas the Tenant Panel found that Derby Homes were customer focused.

Areas which the panel found need attention are listed below:

Reception greeting at council house – It was felt that the greeting was sometimes brusque and not welcoming. On this occasion this was the Derby Homes booth, instead of being asked if they could be of help, the officer simply said ‘take a ticket’ before establishing if this was what was needed or redirection to somewhere else.

IT equipment in enquiry centres slow. – The panel felt that Enquiry Centre staff were hindered by slow running systems especially when they need to consult different consoles, i.e Academy, Optitime, paye.net, Datasquirt, Abritas, Outlook and Word. We observed slow running times on Academy, this can make the call frustrating both for the customer and the member of staff as this used in the main for most enquiries.

Enquiry centre staff found some resistance from housing officers to take calls directly from the Enquiry Centre. The panel understand that housing officers are encouraged to be out on the estates more than they are in the office, so this may not be possible.

Repairs on the dashboard show as completed when the job is still ongoing - Customers expressed their dissatisfaction with this.

What We Did

Visited all five local housing offices.

Held a meeting with managers from different departments including Local Housing Office, Voids, Enquiry Centre, ASB, Customer Service, Communications and Marketing.

Carried out a small sample of repairs satisfaction surveys by telephone.

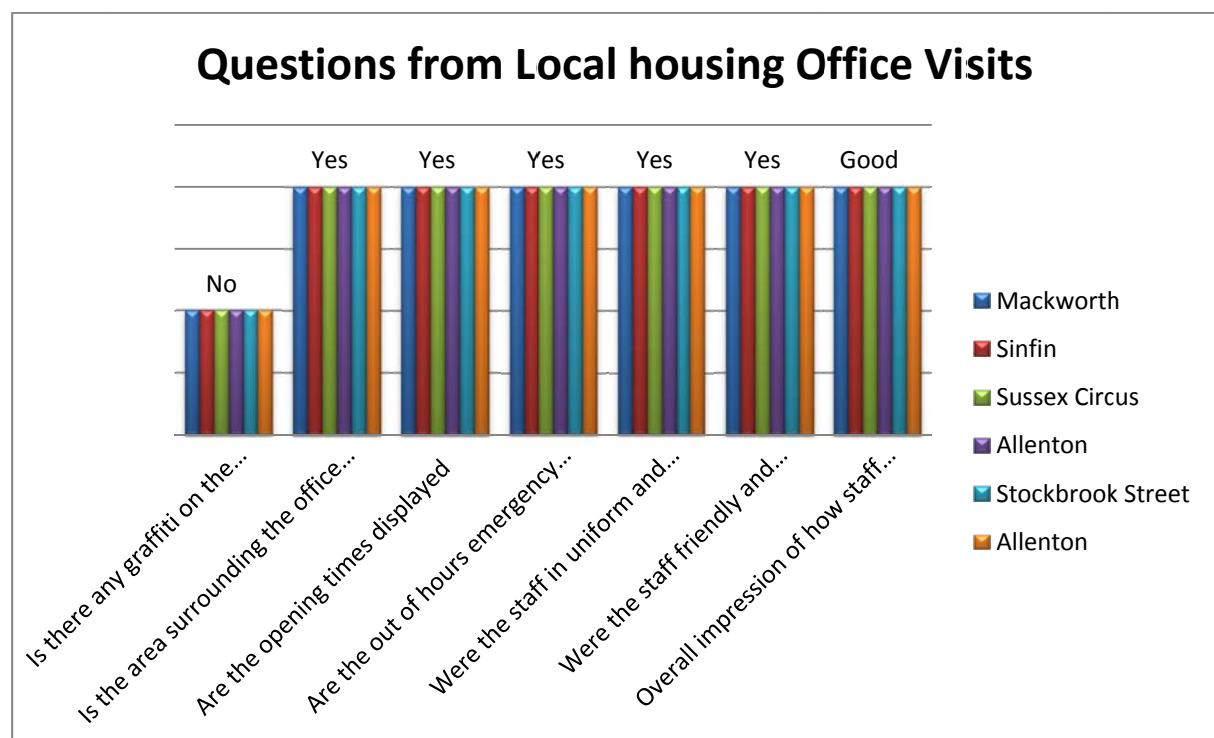
Visited the Enquiry Centres at both the Council House and London Road.

Met with Resident Involvement.

July 2013

We visited all the local housing offices to assess the standard of customer service offered. We spoke to staff present on the day and discussed the way customers were greeted and queries handled. We also talked about staff recognising disabilities and ensuring that customers were treated within the guidelines of Derby Home's equality and diversity policy.

Whilst at the local housing offices a mystery shop was undertaken and results of the main Customer Service related questions are shown below:

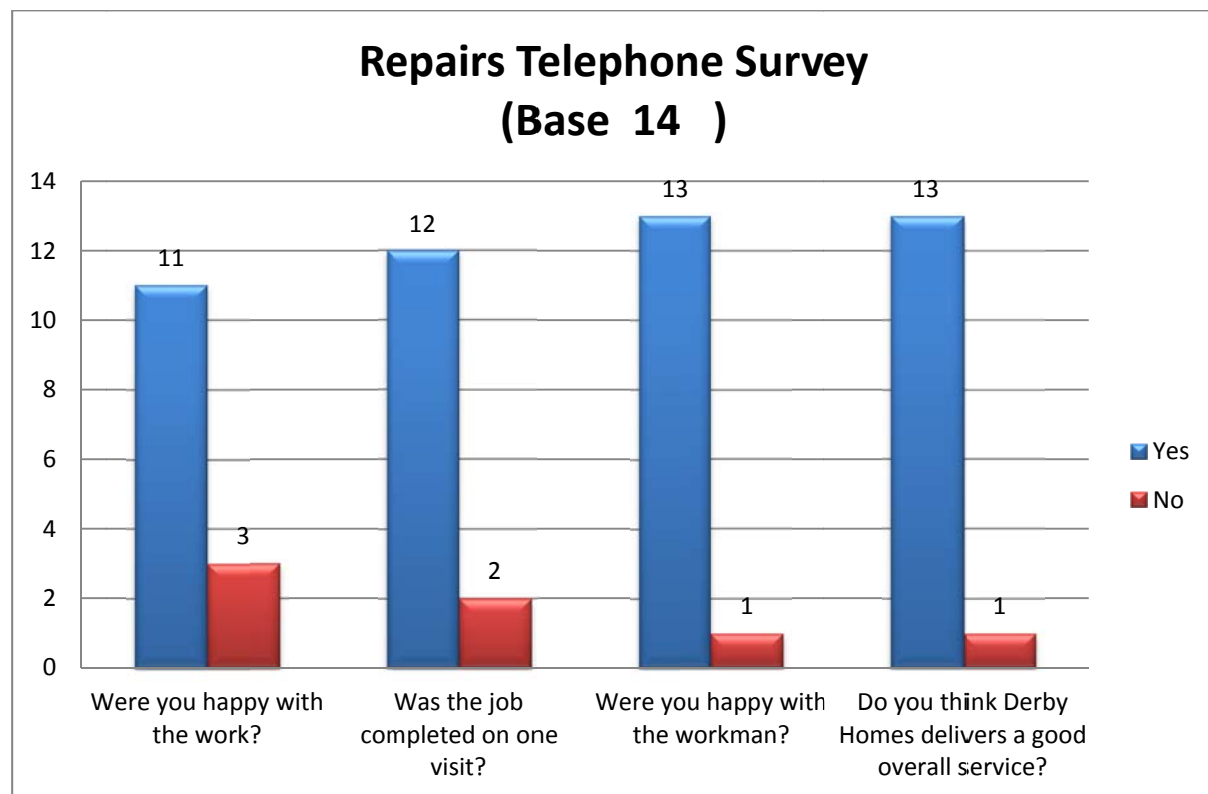


A copy of all areas covered can be found in appendix 2.

Panel members looked at the information (leaflets etc) available to customers, whether access to Derby Homefinder was available and that staff were present to assist customers with the process.

All staff conformed to the Derby Homes dress code and all wore identity badges.

During July we also carried out a small telephone satisfaction repairs survey to 14 customers and found the following:



We also spoke to three departmental managers – Errol Harriet - Contracts Manager for voids, Graeme Walton – Local Housing Manager, Murray Chapman - Customer Service Manager. Due to unforeseen circumstances Managers from the Repairs Team could not attend.

We discussed with Mary Holmes areas of customer service in relation to communication and access channels for customers, ie web, social networking and marketing. We discussed the need for web pages to be relevant and up to date. We are aware that this currently being undertaken throughout Derby Homes.

August

Members of the panel visited the Council House to see the Derby Homes team in action. We listened in on calls received by the Enquiry Centre and spoke to frontline staff. We also visited and repeated the process at the London Road Repairs centre.

We were very happy with the standards of Customer Service we observed.

September

The Panel met with Paul Cole – Resident Involvement Officer about the way forward under the new regulations within the Localism Act. We discussed future plans for Customer Engagement and the interesting proposals that are being working on.

Conclusion

The panel found that overall Derby Homes are customer focused and that staff are committed and fully aware of the standards required of them. All staff are required to attend compulsory Customer Service training to ensure they are fully up to date with their skills.

Staff work hard and to the best of their ability but feel let down by slow IT systems available to them.

On speaking to customers we found that there is high level of satisfaction in relation to customer service. They also stated that they were more satisfied when a repair was carried out by Derby Home's staff rather than a contractor.

Recommendations

1. IT equipment in enquiry centres slow

Investigate the possibility of an enhanced system to enable Enquiry Centre staff to access and record more detailed information. We feel this is necessary if the Enquiry Centre is to function efficiently as a 'one stop shop'. The main area of concern is the speed of Academy, as waiting time seems to have increased from previous visits, this causes frustration to both the customer and the member of staff.

2. Enquiry centre staff found some resistance from housing officers to take calls.

The panel understand that housing officers are encouraged to be out on the estates more than they are in the office, so it may not be possible for the housing officer to take a call immediately. However, we feel that an email to the Housing Officer giving details of the query, with a proposed timescale for contacting the customer would be a step forward. This would ensure that both customer and housing officer are aware of expected timescales for response.

3. Repairs may be seen as completed on the dashboard but may not actually be finished.

Investigate allowing the word pending rather than completed to show on dashboard if a repair is on going.

Appendix 2

Tenant Panel – Public Access Inspection

DateTime

Visited By

Exterior of the Office (circle those that apply)

Is there any graffiti on the building?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Is the area surrounding the office well kept and tidy?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Is the car park litter free? (if applicable)

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Are the opening times displayed?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Are the out of hours emergency numbers displayed in a prominent place and outside of the building?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

What is the condition of the exterior of the building? (Painting and lighting)

Good	Bad	Comments
------	-----	----------

Additional Comments

Staff Member (circle those that apply)

Staff Member's Name

--

Are staff members dressed in uniform and wearing name badges?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Did the staff member deal with you in a friendly and approachable manner?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Please ask the following question

Can you tell me what the process is for checking the details of a tenant?

Are quick assessments done on a tenant that may be suffering with mental health issues?

Physical disabilities that aren't on record?

How are warnings noted down?

What is your overall impression of how you were dealt with by staff?

Good	Bad	Comments
------	-----	----------

Does the member of staff know who the qualified first aider is?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Additional Comments

--

Interior of the office (circle those that apply)

Is the interior of the office clean and tidy?
(Tables and chairs should be in good condition and decoration should be bright and clean)

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Please Collect a copy of each leaflet available in the reception area.

Is the following information available or on display either as a Poster or document?

Local offers

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Reporting ASB

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Supported Living

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Customer Care Charter (10 docs)

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Annual Reports Available

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Housing Focus Group Poster for the area

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Service Improvement Targets

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Is the staff photograph board displayed in the reception?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Are there any handmade or non official signs or poster on display that did not conform with Derby Homes branding guidelines?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Is there a visible First aid box? If not, are staff aware of its position?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

What is your overall impression of the interior of the office?

Good	Bad	Comments
------	-----	----------

Is the Derby Homes logo clearly displayed on notice boards, leaflets and uniforms?

Yes	No	Comments
-----	----	----------

Additional Comments

Additional Comments
