

**CUSTOMER VOICE
HOMEFINDER REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Report of the Customer Voice

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Customer Voice have been reviewing Derby's Homefinder Service since January 2021 as their next scrutiny project. The Customer Voice's Homefinder report (attached as Appendix 1) outlines the findings from the scrutiny panel and makes several recommendations for service improvement. The recommendations have been reviewed by the Social Housing Options Manager who has provided their response as part of the report.
- 1.2 A total of 12 out of 17 of the recommendations have been agreed to be implemented by the manager and these are outlined in the service managers response. The 5 recommendations not immediately agreed will be scoped to see if it possible to implement them.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 To note the Homefinder Review carried out by the Customer Voice.
- 2.2 To note and approve the recommendations jointly agreed by the Customer Voice and Social Housing Options Manager.
- 2.3 To note the continued dialogue regarding outstanding recommendations.
- 2.4 To request a review of progress against the agreed recommendations in 6 months' time.

3. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure the Customer Voice has an effective role in the scrutiny of Derby Homes services and that recommendations, wherever possible, are implemented and monitored.

4. MATTER(S) FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The Customer Voice carried out a review of the Homefinder service between January 2021 and July 2021. This involved scoping the project, conducting research, benchmarking the service with other housing providers, looking at complaints and working with the Social Housing Options Manager to gain a good understanding of the service area.

4.2 The following recommendations were made by the Customer Voice which are explained in more detail in Appendix One:

1. Audio aids to be working at all times on the application website.
2. When no internet access is available, can the Access Team recommend other alternatives.
3. Alternative ways to be made to complete the application process. This is for customers requiring support and unable to complete the form.
4. To include a banding explanation on the automated response after completion of the application.
5. There are a few questions that use corporate jargon. We recommend having an 'i' icon next to the question for customers to hover over and find out more information or remove jargon.
6. All partners and Derby Homes to follow the same format for completing adverts. All advertisers follow their own layout and included information makes it very inconsistent when trying to search for desired property and included assets.
7. For more information to be provided on adverts such as pictures, local area, ward, nearest school, and local supermarket.
8. Include a floor plan of the advertised property and room sizes so customers can establish if rooms are double or single.
9. For more positive text to be included on adverts. Derby Homes adverts are currently focused on eligibility, restrictions and are unattractive. We would recommend including more of the positive benefits of the property.
10. We recommend including the landlord provider on the property advert.
11. Provide a guide to customers that is automated after their application is received so they understand what happens next.
12. Include a breakdown of service charges such as decorating scheme, grounds maintenance and furniture pack etc.
13. Include the Customer Service telephone number and the option to stop an application and save progress.
14. Make sure that supporting organisations who work with Derby Homes enter a service level agreement. This may reduce misinformation and banding difficulties.
15. Derby Homes to provide training to support services focusing on the application process, banding and allocations.

16. Include guidance and contact details on the Homefinder registration page for anyone completing the application on behalf of a customer.
17. A waiver to be agreed between supporting organisations and the customer, that is endorsed by Derby Homes, that doesn't impinge on customers data protection rights.
18. Include a fraud warning on the registration application. Having a clear message regarding fraud and misinformation may reduce further investigation by Derby Homes.

5. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None required.

IMPLICATIONS

6. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Customer Voice is a panel of customer representatives who scrutinise Derby Homes services and provide recommendations for improvement. The Customer Voice consults with customers on what service areas they should review through the issuing of a Customer Survey, which is shown in Appendix one. Customer data from the Complaints process and the Post-Let survey was also used as part of the research for the project.
- 6.2 In addition to customer consultation and customer data, the panel consulted with Derby Homes teams, other housing providers, partner organisations such as Derby City Mission and Women's Work, and used customer case studies to gain further understanding and inform their report.

7. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Any recommendations for improvement will be agreed with the Service Manager and contained within Derby Homes existing budgets. Recommendations may lead to service improvements and cost efficiency.

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

Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Risk
Policy Review

For more information please contact:

Holly Johnson / Customer Engagement and Community Development Manager / 01332 888418 /
Holly.Johnson@derbyhomes.org

Background information:	None
List of appendices	Appendix 1 – Customer Voice Quality of Repairs Report

This report has been approved by the following

Managing Director	Maria Murphy	16/11/21
Finance Director/Derby Homes Accountant	David Enticott or Michael Kirk	26/10/21
Company Solicitor	Taran Lalria	12/11/21
Head of Service	Lorraine Testro	26/10/21