

Customer Scrutiny Report

Service scrutinised	Complaints Procedure
Business area	Business Support
Scrutiny duration	2 Months
Service lead	Claire Robinson
Scrutineers	Anne Thornley, Malcolm Mullett, Angela Du Preez, Jeannine Owen, Mandy Wakelam
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Introduction

We have seen an increase in complaints and there have been some issues highlighted in the complaints process where customers are not being kept up to date with their complaint at the right time. This has led to the scrutiny panel looking at the complaints process.

In this review the scrutiny panel have looked at how to make a complaint, how easy it is to make a complaint, their preferred method of making a complaint and the stages of a complaint.

Activities undertaken

As part of the scrutiny the group carried out the following activities.

- Reading printed materials – Complaints Policy and Procedure, documents tenants have in their tenancy pack about complaints.
- Reading through website information – Online leaflets
- Researching the different methods of making a complaint and the ease of using each one.
- Conversation with the policy officer

Findings and Evidence

Communications and accessibility

Positive findings:

- The group found the complaints policy and process easy to read and understand and said that it was clear and concise.
- Finding the correct section on the website was a little cumbersome having to click through different menus, but once they had got to the relevant section it was quite simple and straight forward.
- Using the phonenumber or speaking to someone face to face to make a complaint was the preferred method; the group found it useful that this could still be done.

- All contact is recorded on the customer Journey profile.
- The group have been advised that creating an evidence log for a complaint, such as ASB, was the first step. This is useful as it shows the member of staff dealing with the complaint the issues that customer has daily.

Areas to improve:

- There is a risk of leaflets and booklets that customers have at home being out of date. It is not known if the stated processes in these were still followed.
- Initial contact at stage 1 of the complaint was seen as less personal than at stage 2. This is because the complaint is investigated without discussion or involvement with the complainant until they get a stage 1 letter.
- Sometimes responses go over the allocated number of days with no explanation and the group felt that even if there is nothing to update, some contact was important.
- Using the online facility to report complaints is not as easy as calling or emailing. The question “what would you like us to do about it?” was seen as a very leading question and unnecessary.
- The group felt that social media was not the right place to log a complaint, whether an inbox message or not. From this we will carry out a follow up scrutiny to establish, the kinds of complaints that come in via social media and the process that those complaints should take.
- The group felt that the head of service which the complaint is about should not investigate their own team’s complaints. Someone independent was seen to be fairer.

Recommendations:

- Complaints booklets to be reissued to customers where necessary and to have an issue date. Some people do not have the internet so would not be able to get the up-to-date online documents.
- The person dealing with the stage 1 complaint should call the complainant first, before investigating the complaint. Once the investigation is completed the response letter should be sent.
- Contact to be made with the complainant if the 10 days are coming up, even if no resolution has been finalised. Communication is very important.
- An independent team or advocate to be used to investigate complaints. This could be a different head of service.
- Take the question “what would you like us to do about it?” off the website as this could create unrealistic expectations from customers.

Equality and diversity

Positive findings:

- The information on the website can be translated to a different language.
- The font on the website can be made bigger.

Areas to improve:

- Clarify if the printed documents can be requested in a different language/braille.

Recommendations:

- For printed documents to state different languages, audio and braille can be requested and documents dated so most recent document is being viewed.

Quality service and value for money

Positive findings:

- Most informal complaints and stage 1 complaints are dealt with satisfactorily. This prevented stage 2 complaints.
- A senior member of staff visits or personally calls customers who have a grievance, to explain the situation and reassure customers.

Areas to improve:

- The group felt that the complainant should be contacted first (before any third party).
- Direct contact should be made with customers making a complaint.

Recommendations:

- More contact (face to face or phone calls) with customers who make a complaint.
- For complainants to be contacted about their complaints before other action is taken. Enabling the staff member to fully understand the nature of the complaint.

Customer engagement

Positive findings:

- The policy is a customer led policy and is signed off by the Customer Assurance Group and Customer Service Committee when it is reviewed.

Areas to improve

Recommendations

Follow up

The recommendations and related actions will be monitored by the Customer Assurances Group.