

Assurances Meeting 18th May 2022

Boardroom 308

Attendees

Morris Grant – Group Member

Karen Smith – Group Member

Malcolm Mullett – Group Member

Dave Stewart – Group Member

Laura Dalton – Housing Manager

Tracy Christian Hansen – Policy Co-Ordinator

Katie Wakefield – Customer Engagement Officer

Jo Tolley – Business Support

Apologies

Caris Henry – Board Member

1. Updates from last meeting around the switch over in utilities between customers has been explained. Group happy with explanation.
2. Laura Dalton Housing Manager
 - Laura gave a presentation around the work that she had been doing in the team since being with Honeycomb Group. She explained about the make up of the team and the roles those staff carry out.
 - Positive news stories – Community grant of £2k implemented and each group can apply for £500. The things funded are an anti knife crime group and helping angels. This year the grant has a bigger budget of £3k.
The gardening competition was a success and will be rolled out again this year.
Coffee mornings – there have been 3 so far and more to come. The level of engagement between staff and customers has really increased.
The noise app has been implemented, there have been 600 recordings in 12 months, and it has assisted with dealing with reports of ASB where customers have denied being involved.
Docusign digital sign up, this has really taken off and has saved 500hrs of staff time and approx. £1500. Dave did comment to say it was very easy, convenient and saved a day off work. Morris did query that if there was digital for the sign ups why were we spending money on 3 monthly rent statements. Laura advised that this is a legal requirement but agreed it was costly.
Laura has reviewed a number of policies and has implemented some changes due to these reviews.
My home group is in the early stages of being set up, this will roll out over the summer. This group will look at policies, procedures and estate management. There have been 211 re lets with the average void days at 73. Karen queried the void loss and how costly this must be to the organisation. Laura advised this is over where we would like it to be and is being worked on through contractors and meetings.
 - There is going to be a week of environmental action commencing 4th July in the Abbey Hulton and Bucknall Areas, this is pilot and will be rolled out in other places if successful.

- Paypal is being set up to enable new customers an easy way to transfer their first months rent.
 - The communications team are working on 3 videos as pre tenancy information videos. This will replace the pre tenancy information booklet and will be sent to customers at different stages of their application.
 - New surveys are being worked on and will be tested with a couple of schemes. These will be based around customers being involved and how they feel about their area and their housing provider.
 - Laura spoke about the CIH Club and best practice that is being shared within the group. Laura is rolling this out throughout the group.
 - The housing team are also working towards DAHA (domestic abuse housing alliance) accreditation. This would enable us to better support those living in Staffs Housing properties. Malcolm did ask if this was something GLOW do, and Laura advised that yes it is, but those customers don't always live in Staffs Housing properties, and this is specific to Staffs Housing.
 - Questions for Laura – Morris asked about the scheme visits and if Laura attended as he felt that in recent years the standards had slipped within some schemes. Laura did advise that she had been to some patch walk abouts but not all and if there were any specific issues she would look in to them. Morris mentioned the washing lines at Rhodes Court, Laura did do a consultation via letter and text and had no response. Tracy did say that may be we could revisit the issue and offer alternatives to where the washing line is currently. This is something Laura will look at. The broken window at Rhodes Court is still boarded up with cardboard – Laura will ask Natalie about this.
- Also raised was board members and exec team visiting schemes and how often they get the chance to do this. The group feel that this would give them a great opportunity to speak to customers and to assess the quality of the current housing stock Staffs Housing have.
- Malcolm did raise the issue of planned works and repairs. Laura explained about the contractor and some things taking longer, and this is a maintenance issue rather than a housing issue. Katie did advise that this had been covered by Mark W in a previous meeting and is currently being addressed.
- The guttering at The Hollies was raised again and Katie said that she would raise this with Tim and Mark.
- The group feel that an explanation of why programmed works had stopped would be of benefit to all customers. Because the issues being caused by the lack of upkeep are going to become more costly in the long run.
- It has been queried about leaseholders having pets and subletting properties. Laura has advised that all leaseholders should follow the same protocol as any other customer around the pets policy and any that do have pets should be reported so that they can be looked in to. She also advised that subletting a lease hold property needs to have permission granted. Any addresses that are doing this need to be reported.

3. Katie went through the Fair Deal how well the group are doing in achieving satisfaction. There has been a drop in satisfaction with day to day repairs and this is being worked on by the maintenance team and contractor. The group were happy

with everything else in this report and are looking forward to the customer service mystery shops starting back up.

4. Katie went through the quarterly activity table and the group were impressed with the number of activities being taken part in and the number of live and learn courses being signed up to.
5. Jo fed back about the mystery shops and advised that 93% pass rate was an exceptional score. The group identified that the main area of concern is the cleanliness of the properties when the shops are taking place and mentioned that this is the basics. Jo has advised that there are two new contractors taking on the voids for us and they are getting through them and giving out a better standard.
6. Katie gave an update on the Customer Engagement Strategy and Plan and how we as a group are achieving the 6 customer voice promises. Over the last year we have engaged with 408 customers and 122 live and learn courses had been signed up to. Katie and Jo have also been working with the communications team to create new customer role profiles and these will go live internally from Monday 23rd and will also be available online. These are what everyone within the group will use to recruit customers to engagement.
7. Any other business:
 - Jo gave an update on complaints for Q4 and explained that these have been the main reason why we looked at complaints as the scrutiny.
 - Repairs and Building Safety Update – Jo advised that the new group had been set up and had met twice. Tim attended the last meeting and explained the key points of building safety and the new building safety bill. A consultant had been in and looked at how we store the information we currently collect, this has lead to a project being done by the business analyst team and they have created a new space to store this information so that it marries up with all systems and is readily available to anyone who needs to access it. So far the gas has been completed and this will be rolled out to all reportable areas of the building safety, this includes Gas Checks, Electrical Checks, Water Checks, Lifts, Asbestos and Fire Risk Assessments.
 - Katie advised that leading on from this we have looked at what is currently outstanding and there are 4 gas checks that need to be done and 466 electrical checks. Jon Parkes has advised that the gas checks will be completed asap if not already done, inline with the access policy. The electrical checks have been handed over to a new contractor and will be completed as part of a programme. The water checks are at any scheme with communal/stored water or staff onsite and there are 36 locations for this.
 - Katie gave an update on the scrutiny of complaints and that it was done because of the increase in the number of complaints. Katie went through the list of recommendations and the responses from the staff member who owned the recommendation, the group were happy with the issues highlighted. Katie did advised that the scrutiny group will look in to the reporting of complaints via social media with the communications team. This will enable us to understand the types of complaints coming in through this channel and what happens to them following being picked up.