

Learning from Complaints Steering Group

26 April 21

Attending

NAME	ROLE
Dorcas Gyimah (DG)	Member of Resident Scrutiny Steering Group
Lily Monk (LM)	Customer Operations Director
Suzanne Horsley (SH)	Director of Building Safety
Sasha Harrison (SHa)	Home and Property Services Director - South
Paul Yates (PY)	Home and Property Services Director – North
Anabel Palmer (AP)	Community and Investment and Care Director
Carl Dewey (CD)	Southern Maintenance Services Director
Tariq Qureshi (TQ)	Director of Sales and Marketing
Luke Chandler (LC)	Director of Development Delivery
Kerris Horne (KH)	Head of New Homes Aftercare
Jenny Poore (JP)	Human Resources Director
Kerry Clare (KC)	Customer Involvement Manager
Ian Scott (IS)	Director of Estate Services
Helen Bowerbank (HB)	Service Charge – Commercial Lead
Elisabeth Williams (EW)	Director of Strategy and Policy
Paula Steel (PS)	Head of Digital Strategy and Delivery
Chris Harris (CH)	Executive Director Customer Services
Charlotte Bougon (CB)	Head of Customer Relations
Amy Brennan (AB)	Customer Relations Improvement Consultant
Chris Parrish (CP)	Customer Relations Assurance and Improvement Consultant

Apologies

NAME	ROLE
Angie Smith	Learning and Development Manager
Elle Boyle	Customer Relations Improvement Manager
Sarah Wilson	Chair of Resident Scrutiny Steering Group

Meeting Minutes

	Minutes	Action Owner
1.	Welcome to our first meeting and thank you for joining. Run through of agenda for the meeting. Introductions delayed until Dorcas joins.	
2.	Thank you for attending, I appreciate your time commitment. We are getting into a new phase for complaints and it has certainly been a challenge this year so far! 2 drivers for complaints – the pandemic & steer from the regulator. Learnings from complaints are very important and outlined by Housing Ombudsman (HoS).	

	Some learnings can be quite overwhelming for recipients, we as the senior management team can help to push this along. At the end of the year we need to say that we have made progress. At the heart of learning from complaints is what our customers are telling us.	
3.	How we learn – case by case individual case learnings, learning from Stage 2’s – key learnings from investigating end to end case. Quality assurance role, to ensure case management and data quality. There is a cost to cases and reducing the numbers helps with both our service offer and financially.	
4.	For each case that is fully or partially upheld we get learnings from each case handler. The types of actions that we see: Training – reminders, briefings, training sessions for individuals, teams and third parties Process – generally we’ve seen these as tweak in process rather than overhaul and one example in aftercare was to give it more structure with a standard template Policy – not adhering to policies by not acting on discretions for exceptional cases is what we have seen Systems – Customer Dynamics is what people might expect, but for example handover template that is now being used that is improving service by Home Services are small changes that also help.	
5.	97% of our reviewed complaints fall into these learning categories. Looking at day to day repairs key learnings: - The resident not being kept up to date - Setting residents expectations - Human error (incorrect tickets being raised) Looking at service delivery complaints key learnings: - Not providing updates/contact even if there is no update - Individuals not following up on promises - Case information not being recorded on Dynamics Looking at Repair Complaint Gas key learnings: - The resident not being kept updated about delays - Unavailable parts - Incorrect information being shared between contractors - engineers not checking notes prior to the appointment 45% of our complaints were a result of people-related service failure. A big section of this is the attitude and behaviour of staff. This relates to our contractors, but for our residents this is one and the same, to them they are dealing with Southern Housing Group. No heating and hot water (NHHW) complaints are a particular focus of the Housing Ombudsman. NHHW has always been a bigger issue in the North, looking at the data, this points to the systems being older. 48% of resident who have raised a complaint about TSG had never made a complaint about anything else before or since. This points to the resident really being at the end of their tether. Re-visualising data, the different options we have, to better suit our needs.	
6.	In response to training question: CP – learning from complaints around training in my experience has been at a local level and these are raised with the heads of for action. Not to say always, and some will need interventions from L&D that the Heads of will need to pick up. Some examples of recommendations are individuals needing awareness of policy through reminders/refreshers. This can also impact the teams as well and this wider learning is also considered within the recommendation. Most often this is an oversight were an individual has missed something on a particular occasion. LM – if anyone is seeing this kind of feedback about members of their teams, please have a think about what a quick win can be and what might be a more longer-term consideration.	

<p>Action Point - Directors to consider their training plans for the year considering the current interventions (blue sky training and customer service values training) for wider development of individuals.</p> <p>EW – I wonder if there is a gap for key subject matter experts within the business and to what extent we are valuing the knowledge of others, outside of the formal training structure to give line managers a bit of back up.</p>	All
<p>Action Point – Front line staff such as the Service Centre, Customer Relations Team and Home Services team should be made aware of key subject matter experts for Operational matters and policies</p>	All
<p>Action Point - Complaint Champions to be identified and appointed to be the conduit to and from the business for Learning from Complaints matters.</p>	All
<p>CD – we need to be mindful as an organisation that if we try to drive our performance in one area, that we don't set our contractors up to overpromise and under deliver. You want the engineer on the ground to understand what they need to do on a daily basis to drive excellence.</p>	All
<p>Action Point – randomly select operatives from different contractors to provide feedback in the form of a service survey.</p>	All
<p>Action Point – host a round table event on learning from complaints with contractor contract managers to better understand the existing ways of working between the Group and contractors.</p>	All
<p>Dorcas joins meeting – introductions to everyone at the meeting.</p>	
<p>DG - flagged a concern about the relationship between SHG-contractor. In her experience, in regard to a leak, she was told by a contractor service centre that an appointment couldn't be booked for 2 weeks despite it being an urgent issue where the leak was uncontrollable. She thought better communication was needed and more empathy needed. She suggested an immediate survey following her call would have captured her thoughts and provided the feedback instantaneously to help prevent a complaint from coming in later.</p>	All
<p>Action Point – Consider how we quality assure contractor service centres and align their customer service offer to the Groups to ensure best practice.</p>	All
<p>CD – shared the position of how he thought the SHG policy should have been applied and how these policies should be followed across the board regardless of who the contractor is.</p>	
<p>SHa – we shouldn't lose sight of the positive interactions with our customers and how we can learn from these too, we have thousands of repairs that go ahead, and residents are happy.</p>	
<p>LM – we need to recognise the things that go well to replicate them</p>	All
<p>Action Point – Report on contextualising complaints where possible (for example, how many repairs are completed for each repair complaint).</p>	All
<p>Action Point – produce more communications to recognise the positives of activity across the Group and the ongoing success stories identified by Learning from Complaints.</p>	All
<p>CD – we need to recognise what complaints are waiting for parts etc, and what complaints are not turning up for appointments where we've made them. For the former, we will have to consider potential options. For the latter, this is the low hanging fruit which we should be able to do something about.</p>	All
<p>Action Point – Documenting our process for missed appointments and aligning this with Contractors to ensure best practice.</p>	All

<p>TQ – we have found success in some activities to help mitigate complaints and improve services when we have the time to pick this up. We looked at getting our consultants and estate agents to look at what good service looked like – role play viewings for example. We are also looking at starting mystery shopping, so that we can get that feedback and make improvements. Maybe this is something that could be applied to other areas.</p> <p>KC – the mystery shopper idea is something we have been considering with involved residents for some time. Currently we ask for user experience feedback (i.e. residents giving real time feedback on their experience on something) but we could apply a mystery shopper approach if we deem it appropriate.</p> <p>PS – Picking up on missed, changed, or cancelled appointments. The repairs online portal doesn't currently include this functionality yet, we are looking to bring in reschedule/cancelling to repairs online. This would only apply from the customer's side though and depend on what Oneserve says, if an operative has cancelled or rescheduled this won't show on the portal. It would also only be relevant to the day to day repairs teams.</p> <p>AB – gave an example she is familiar with of returning parts from a specific complaint case. In this case there was a no access appointment, so the part was returned to depot. The operative did not keep the part for the future appointment which led to the complaint.</p> <p>SH – this may be for many reasons such as the operative not being the one who is going to carry out the follow up appointment or because of the cost of parts. If the part is worth £1,000 for example, they will not be insured to keep this on their van overnight so we need to consider what we can do to overcome this challenge accepting this point.</p>	
<p>Action Point – Documenting our process for a centralised point for parts around appointments and aligning this with Contractors to ensure best practice.</p> <p>CB – at what point are the contracts due for review with our contractors? There may be some quick wins that we can feed into this.</p> <p>SH – within the next 18 months. Christmas is a tough time for TSG, with a high number of boiler services due we know this as it also falls over a busy period of gas services, but there is more to consider than complaints. For context, we considered shifting the service dates with TSG before, knowing of this busy period, but it would've cost us £300,000 to do so. I also note one of the previous slides about boiler ages from Amy. In 2017/18 a call was made to adopt a just in time boiler replacement approach instead of replacing them at a set date. To date this has saved us c.£9 million. We also have to consider how we replace boilers in line with the gas boiler replacement strategy as well, where we're looking to find an alternative heating solution for 2030 onwards.</p>	All
<p>PY – I was really struck from the data from Amy's earlier presentation, I think we need to think about some proactive information and how this data is presented and shared.</p> <p>Action Point – Heads of service work with their contractor peers to improve what data is used to identify positive customer outcomes.</p>	All
<p>AP – looking at the numbers and data, we are looking massively at our contractors both gas and day to day. Carl once said to me, we have just better customer care. We're not better builders or contractors we are just more professional and respectful. There may also be something in how detached our contractors are from residents as they may not see it is the resident who is paying them and be more steps removed than say an SMS operative.</p>	
<p>Action Point – investigate if a real time survey could be administered by operatives completing work. Where not possible, consider how we use the existing survey responses provided to Contractors.</p>	All
<p>CB – with the new CD build, for the first time ever we'll be able to truly report on the drivers. We may see a change in data and will be tracking this very closely through the learning from complaints approach and our quality assurance. I think we would all agree there is definitely work to be done, but this will show us the things that have come up and enable us to hold people to account.</p>	

7.	<p>The new area of focus for HoS is estate management.</p> <p>Key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parking (request for parking permits, parking tickets) - value for money (unhappy about paying for service charge due to issues) - Staff conduct - Cleaning - Bins - Pests/birds/vermin <p>These issues predominantly affect the North. 2020 saw a year on year 52% decline in cases! 89% of complaints from leaseholders come exclusively from MP or Councillor enquiry</p>	
8.	<p>Complaints regarding pets, very emotive language over the distress of not being able to keep a pet, but looking at the data 1/3 of complaints in this area are about not being able to keep a pet, whereas 2/3 of complaints are about nuisance from a neighbours pet. This can give us insight and look at things more objectively.</p>	
9.	<p>Minutes to be circulated Notes to be compiled and shared online with our customers Next meeting in July (quarterly meeting)</p>	
10.	<p>N/A</p>	

Distribution of minutes:

Date and time of next meeting: Quarterly meeting, July